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# **FORTY YEARS OF MUSIC**



# **FORTY YEARS OF MUSIC**

**1865-1905**

**BY**

**JOSEPH BENNETT**

**/**

**WITH TWENTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS**

**METHUEN & CO.**

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JOSEPH BENNETT

WITH WARMEST REGARD  
THE AUTHOR OF THIS VOLUME  
DEDICATES IT  
TO  
GEORGE H. JOHNSTONE, Esq., J.P.  
A  
FRIEND OF MUSIC  
AND OF ALL  
WHO LABOUR FOR THE GOOD OF THE  
ART DIVINE





## PREFATORY NOTE

**T**HIS book needs no elaborate Introduction, and I therefore present none. It will convey some information to younger readers concerning the musical generation that preceded their own ; it will revive many memories for those who were my contemporaries in the Past, and it may contribute somewhat to the material upon which alone can the wise prophet of the Present base his estimate of the Future.

For able assistance in the preparation of the volume, I am greatly indebted to Miss Aitken (Mrs Norman Morcom, Cairo) and Miss Dorothy Aitken (Mrs R. Owen Seacome, Cheltenham). These ladies will, I hope, accept my most sincere thanks.

I am also under great obligation to Mr Charles Lyall, for kind permission to reproduce a selection from his clever and humorous caricature sketches.

J. B.



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# FORTY YEARS OF MUSIC

## CHAPTER I

How I became a critic—A chance remark—Henry Coleman—I am deputy critic *sub rosa*—Mr Seale of Leicester Square and the *Sunday Times*—My first article—A proud and joyful author—Seale suspects that Coleman employs a “devil”—Coleman’s failure—He resigns in my favour—I take his place—Work crowds upon me.

**I**N the course of the eternal war between critics and criticised, it is sometimes asked by the more numerous and more suffering party: “Who are these anonymous judges? By what system, if there be a system, is their appointment regulated? Are they examined by experts, or installed by men who know nothing about the essential qualifications?” I am not going to answer such questions here, but simply, and in few words, to state how I myself became a critic. Somewhat in the nature of an accident was the process which gave me a lowly post as the honorary deputy of an amateur. I have told the story before, and now must briefly tell it again.

In the early spring of 1865 I was the conductor of a private Choral Society, the members of which were drawn from the district lying between Blackheath and New Cross. These ladies and gentlemen met for practice in the private house of one or other among them, and the gatherings, even apart

from the music, were very enjoyable. On a certain evening, for me most eventful, after the practice was over, a few men lingered for a friendly chat. One of them said à propos to nothing antecedent : "It is a wonder that I am here to-night. I was asked to attend a concert at Exeter Hall for a friend who is a critic, but could not be present in person. I thought it my duty to come here, and here I am." Those words, apparently of the very smallest importance as they fell from the speaker's lips, changed the whole course of my life. Moved by sudden impulse, I remarked : "Should your friend want help in the future, and I am disengaged, I shall be pleased to act for him." There the matter dropped, and I thought no more about it till, within a few days, I received a letter signed "Henry Coleman," the writer of which invited me to call upon him at his office, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Leadenhall Street, precisely where I cannot now say, but I remember that it was a large building, having offices in the basement as well as higher up. To one of those low-lying apartments I was introduced, and there found a man whose appearance, bearing, and expression seemed to show that he was on excellent terms with the world and himself. In a few moments I gathered that Mr Henry Coleman had not long before been appointed musical critic of the *Sunday Times*; that his professional engagements as a solicitor occasionally kept him from concerts which he was expected to notice, and that having heard

of me as one willing to help in an emergency, he would be delighted to welcome my assistance. About terms nothing, of course, was said. I was a voluntary worker, and regarded myself as well paid by opportunities of hearing good music. Upon this, events marched rapidly. I soon was the recipient of a small pile of tickets, and of instructions to attend as many concerts as possible, write notices of them, and forward the "copy" to my principal. There stood I, at the giddy and altogether unexpected elevation of an honorary deputy-critic, very proud of my new position, and extremely anxious to see my opinions in print.

My first concert was given, to the best of my recollection, in one of the smaller rooms at St James's Hall. The only points I clearly recall in connection with it are the appearance of Madame De Meric Lablache, and the sense of responsibility with which I prepared a notice for my chief. I could not have been more in earnest if the fate of all the artists who took part had depended upon my judgment. Even more vividly do I recall the fever of expectation in which I awaited the next issue of the *Sunday Times*. On the Saturday before that issue was properly due I chanced to be strolling along the then picturesque riverside of Old Chelsea. I passed many of the quaint shops without particular notice, but at the door of one my attention was arrested by some newspapers in a rack nailed to the doorpost. Stopping and looking down the row of journals, I saw, to my

astonishment and delight, a copy of the *Sunday Times* for the next day. Needless to say, that paper straightway became my property, and, after a struggle with the wind, then blowing briskly up the river, I laid it open at the musical columns. There was my article, without a word changed, and there was I, perfectly able to sympathise with the feeling of Charles Dickens, who has told us that on seeing his first paper in a magazine, he walked down to Westminster Hall to read and re-read it, pacing the floor beneath the august roof with swelling pride. Every literary or journalistic man knows what the feeling is, and can understand that, though with much less cause, I was not less pleased than the illustrious novelist.

A day or two later, I saw my principal in his underground den. He opened upon me at once, saying, "Didn't you tell me that you had never written a concert notice in your life?" I pleaded guilty, and he, laughing, observed, "You don't expect me to believe you now. You're an old hand, that's what you are." We did not debate the matter, passing on to the practical work of giving and receiving many more concert tickets. This was, of course, quite satisfactory to both of us, but, as the weeks went on, it became clear to me that I was doing nearly all the work of the musical department, to my own great pleasure, certainly, but scarcely to my profit. A change had to come, and it came at the instance of my chief, who, if not a brilliant journalist, was a very

good fellow in his way. He saw, as he told me, that an arrangement which gave him all the pay, such as it was, and allotted to myself all the work, could hardly be pronounced a case of perfect balance. So, one day, he said to me: "I receive two guineas a week from the *Sunday Times*. Let us divide the spoil. I will take a guinea, you will take the same, and no doubt we can run comfortably in double harness for a long time." Thus it was agreed, and I went up the steps into the street as a professional critic, at a salary of twenty-one shillings per week, and in the curious position of a journalist who has no engagement with his proprietor, to whom he is utterly unknown. But this did not last long.

The then proprietor of the *Sunday Times*—a Mr Seale—carried on what was described as a "Bank" in Leicester Square, hard by where the Empire now stands. Seale, an elderly man of pompous bearing, was very proud of his position as the owner of a journal, and had a high opinion of the influence exerted by his paper. He was fond of small type and solid columns, permitted no wild shrieks of liberty anywhere within his domain, and required the principal members of his staff to visit him in Leicester Square every Monday morning, that he might give instructions, and, if necessary, administer reprimands. Thither, each at the hour appointed, would repair Henry Barnett, leader writer and essayist; Joseph Knight, dramatic critic; the sporting contributor, the City editor,

and my friend, Henry Coleman. After a time, it seems to have dawned on Mr Seale that the musical criticisms were not always of the same quality. They varied so much, as a matter of fact, that the proprietor suspected the existence of two writers. To suspect, with him, was to inquire, and, in this case, to inquire was to discover that he really had two musical critics, of whom only one was avowed and known. Discovering my identity, he invited me to call upon him, and, after some conversation, the proprietor, swelling visibly with dignity meant to impress, made me an offer of the post held by my legal friend. He would give me the same salary and an extra guinea for a weekly column on some social subject.<sup>1</sup> "Then," said he, with the air of one who confers wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, "you will have three guineas a week." Of course, I tendered my thanks for a proposal really thought by him to be generous, as perhaps it was under the circumstances, but I was staunch to Coleman, and firmly declined even to consider the matter until after communication with the actual holder of the position. The proprietor agreed that that was the right course to take, and so we parted for the time. Not long after, Coleman informed me that he had sent in his resignation. He could not attend to the duties

<sup>1</sup> This column, under the heading "Out and About," was written by me for several years, and carried on after my resignation by my friend, Ashby Sterry, and others in succession to him.



of the post, which I should be sure to fill better than he,—so he was pleased to say—and accordingly I succeeded him with his entire acquiescence in the change.

The reader now knows how one musical critic was made, and that one, at the point just reached, thought himself on the high-road to success, but I see now that the odds were very much against me. I was absolutely unknown to musicians outside a small Nonconformist circle, and I myself knew nobody of musical influence save John Goss, of St Paul's Cathedral, with whom I had a slight acquaintance. Moreover, the journal upon which I began writing had fallen from what was at one time a position of some importance. A great deal of "spade" work, therefore, lay before me, but, I was in large measure eased by simple good fortune.

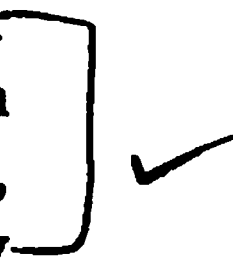
I had written for the *Sunday Times* only a little while before a letter reached me from the editor of the *Musical Standard*—a Mr Hammond. This gentleman, who was, I think, an organist, and had offices in the Poultry, where he carried on some sort of business, had founded, or helped to found, the *Musical Standard*, and by its means, at one time, advocated the cause of the College of Organists, which, as the Royal College of Organists, is now a flourishing institution. He wanted a new hand upon his paper, and his letter to me was an invitation to become a contributor. As may be supposed, the pay was not

an income in itself, but every little helps, and I duly enlisted under Mr Hammond's flag. My articles were chiefly "leaders," the editor and myself contributing a first "leader" alternately. The choice of subject was, however, limited, and afforded very little scope for a writer who wished to attract attention. Of this I did not complain, for, indeed, I saw in the *Musical Standard* another round on the ladder which, if at all possible, I was resolved to climb.

## CHAPTER II

Musical critics of 1865-70—Henry F. Chorley—George Hogarth—Henry Lincoln—John Edmund Cox—Charles Lewis Gruneison.

LONDON musical criticism in 1865, and for some years afterwards, was in a strange condition. Of the critics themselves, I knew absolutely none when I joined their ranks as a raw recruit, and what I say of them now is based upon knowledge afterwards gained either by personal intercourse or by close observation. They consisted of a central group presided over by James William Davison, of the *Times*, and an outlying set, each man moving independently in, so to speak, his own orbit. Among these, Henry F. Chorley held a prominent place. Chorley wrote various books, which can be consulted, and are of far higher authority on the subject of his eccentric personality than I can pretend to be. Indeed, I had no personal intercourse with Chorley, nor did he, on his part, seek to be acquainted with his brothers of the pen. But Chorley was an interesting character, albeit exclusive. He had a special faculty of putting nasty remarks in very small paragraphs, with the inevitable result of making himself obnoxious, not only to those for whom they were intended, but also to their sympathisers



amongst the public and in the press. He was a man of strong likes and equally powerful dislikes. As a partisan, he appears in his unswerving advocacy of Gounod, Meyerbeer, and others, who at that time had to make their way into English favour. The same fidelity was shown by him to certain English musicians. He was quick to see evidences of ability in young artists. His championship of Sullivan, for example, was of the highest service and never changed. He was no less a friend of Charles Santley. These were, doubtless, somewhat special cases, but there were many others not needing to be specified.

Another independent critic was the venerable ✓ George Hogarth, of the *Daily News*. As Hogarth was born in 1783, he had in 1865 reached a time of life in which, if a man has lived cleanly, he is rightly described as venerable. I recall an aged man, low in stature, feeble in gait, of ruddy countenance—his son-in-law, Charles Dickens, might have styled him an “apple-faced old gentleman”—and having a well-shaped head, crowned with a glory of white hair, which he wore rather long. What measure of influence he possessed at an earlier age I do not know; Hogarth, however, was no mere literary dabbler in musical matters. ✓ He had studied the art in theory and practice. He was a contributor to the *Harmonicon*, as far back as 1830, and became a recognised critic in 1834, when he took service on the staff of the *Morning Chronicle*; subsequently, in 1846, joining

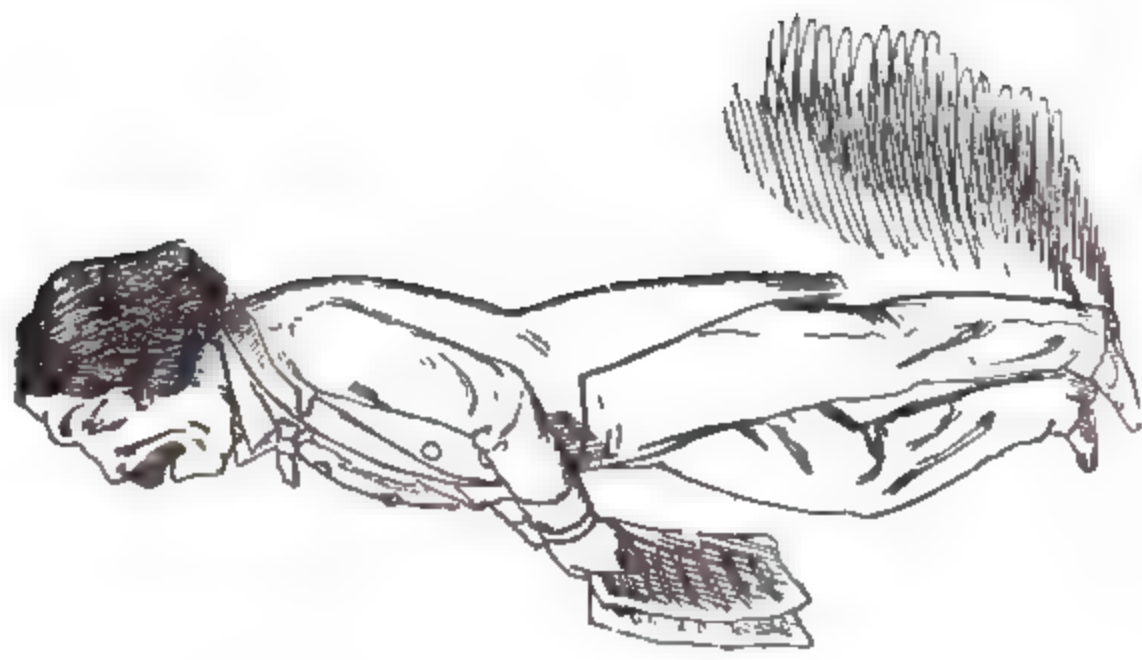
the just established *Daily News*, and remaining in the employ of that journal till 1866, when he resigned in favour of his assistant, Henry Lincoln. It was a man of some mark, therefore, who moved feebly about the concert-rooms of forty years ago—a survival even from the eighteenth century; mere ashes, if you like, but ashes in which, as now and then appeared, “lived their wonted fires.” Age prevented him, at the time of which I write, from going much into Society, and my opportunities of benefiting by his knowledge and experience were few. As already stated, Hogarth laid down his critical pen in 1866. In 1870 he died.

I have referred above to Hogarth's successor, Henry Lincoln. He, too, was in large measure an independent critic, by which I mean one who was not to be influenced by any other opinions than his own. Lincoln passed away not long since, but he had lived for some years the life of a hermit, seen by nobody, and wanting to see none; playing the fugues of Bach and, very probably, nursing his grievances, of which he generally had a large stock on hand. An honest man was Henry Lincoln; unswervingly faithful to his ideals and a most conscientious servant of the journal he represented. A stylist he was not, and even his grammar was sometimes at fault, but his thoughts repaid his readers, especially as he never lost himself in the vague, or attempted fine writing. Lincoln was about the same age as Davison, and the two men were friends, that is to say as far

as Lincoln's suspicions would permit. He seemed to fear that an interlocutor would try to discover his opinions and turn them to his own use. In the same way he took excessive precautions when compelled to seek information from a brother critic. In that case he suspected a purposely wrong answer, and would not rest until he had received corroboration from the mouth of others. His dread of seeing his opinions appropriated had a striking illustration at one of the Birmingham Festivals. We were seated in the front row of the gallery side by side, and Lincoln, as usual, was burdened with many papers—slips on which he had already made notes, a book of the words, a copy of the music, etc., etc. These impedimenta gave him much trouble, which reached a climax when a careless movement on his part sent the slips containing his notes floating down upon the heads of the audience. I do not quote the exclamation made as he jumped to his feet, but its continuation was, "As sure as fate I shall see my notes in some wretched Birmingham paper." He started off in search of the precious records, but whether they were found I never knew. He was not a communicative man.

✓ Not so splendidly isolated as the critics above named, but having a way of their own on occasion, were the Reverend John Edmund Cox, rector of St Helen's, Bishopsgate, and author of a book entitled "Musical Recollections of the Last Half-Century," and Charles Lewis Gruneison. Cox was





SIMS REEVES



C. L. GRÜNEISON



for many years the critic of a paper more concerned with agriculture than art, and known as *Bell's Weekly Messenger*. I can hardly describe him as a critic of distinction, but he may have made up for what he lacked in that respect by the very positive character of his opinions. He was on terms of friendship with Michael Costa, and, ✓ like Grüneison, became one of that musician's most faithful henchmen. It was in this capacity that he figured as an assailant of J. W. Davison under circumstances which I shall have to speak of later on.

Grüneison, born in 1806, the son of a naturalised ✓ Dutchman, spent a long and varied life in the service of London journals. He seems to have been ready to undertake any duties, from those of a war correspondent to the milder work of a musical critic. In his later years, he became secretary of the Conservative Land Society, but his obligations in that capacity did not prevent him from attending concerts, frequenting festivals, and ✓ contributing articles to whatsoever newspaper would accept them. He was a blustering man, and, when permitted, an overbearing one, but not unpopular with his associates, to whose enjoyment he would contribute startling stories of adventure by flood and field. Grüneison was fond of relating the circumstances of a narrow escape from death while acting as correspondent during one of the Carlist insurrections in Spain. Having been captured in a skirmish, Grüneison and a number

of combatant prisoners were drawn up in a line for inspection by the officer in command. The sentence was that every tenth man in the rank should be shot, and Grüneison's story reached its highest dramatic point as he told how a sergeant came down the line picking out the doomed soldiers, one of whom stood next to the teller of the tale. The unfortunates were immediately executed. Grüneison would relate this adventure on very slight pressure, and it was remarked that the narrative occasionally varied, but, as we all know, memory is treacherous, and the sensations attending so narrow an escape may have been of a terribly confusing nature. How it came to pass that Grüneison joined the ranks of musical critics I am not able to say, but it could hardly have been through lack of assurance on his own part. Anyhow, he did become a critic, and an aggressive one, especially in relation to his colleagues. The result was sometimes a fierce dispute, but Grüneison enjoyed the alarums and excursions incident to a spell of wordy warfare, and stuck to his heavy guns (they were very heavy) with grim determination. One of his controversies was with Davison, who out-fought him at all points, being a far greater master of language, infinitely more cunning of fence, and a very Croesus in wealth of resource. The fight between these two men had nothing in common with a French duel. Each intended to hit hard, and Davison, lame though he was, may be said to have danced round

his bulky opponent, whom he sometimes spoke of as "Jenkins," Grüneison being then on the *Morning Post*, and sometimes as "Green-eye-sen." This, though not very brilliant wit, was characteristic of a time when the amenities of the *Edinburgh Review* had not been forgotten.

Grüneison, though a musical critic, was not a musician—a fact which probably explains the dogmatic character of his utterances. Asserting this during the controversy just mentioned, Davison selected as proof certain gems from his opponent's notice of Macfarren's opera "Don Quixote." Here are a few of these bijoux :—Grüneison : "The 'Sequidilla' is a solemn strain with a most lugubrious refrain." Davison : "The 'Sequidilla' is no such thing, it is a cheerful air; the critic was thinking of a 'Sarabande.'" Again Grüneison : "A very pretty chorus in E sharp is Mr Macfarren's 'Sequidilla.'" Davison : "There is no such key known as E sharp." Once more Grüneison : "The air 'Maid of Toboso,' in G sharp, is a dreary infliction." Davison : "If the air were in G sharp it might prove a dreary infliction, but it happens to be in G simply." Lastly, Grüneison : "'Life is an April Day,' in A sharp, is insufficiently carried out." Lastly, Davison : "The key of A sharp is another of the very sharp keys of this exceedingly sharp critic that are utterly unknown to musical composers. The key of Mr Macfarren's song is D. The key of A sharp is never used,—is totally unnecessary,

and exists only in the muddled brain of the word-splutterer, whose analysis we are analysing."

✓ Journalistic feuds seldom last long, and the fierce combatants of the forties were good friends in the sixties, when I came to know them. At provincial festivals they "chummed" together invariably, and it was on such occasions—myself being admitted to the company as a third chum—that I had opportunity to study the active and bellicose critic with whom we have seen Davison cross swords. There were points in Grüneison's nature which could not fail to attract. He was a staunch friend as well as a hurtling foe. His devotion to Costa always ✓ appeared to me as extraordinary, seeing that the Italian conductor, austere, rigid, and proud, had none of the soft graces which sometimes call forth personal affection. But, with Grüneison, whatever Costa did was right. To question that chief's infallibility was to bring a hard glare into the eyes of his friend. With all his bounce and bluster Grüneison certainly had noble and generous impulses. I like to think of him, as a man, in the character of a most affectionate and devoted husband. Mrs Grüneison's birthday often fell on one of the days of a provincial festival, and it was her dutiful lord's pleasure, on each occasion, to spread a liberal feast for himself and his two chums and to propose the poor lady's health; she being at the time, and for many years, a confirmed invalid. At such moments, what did it matter that, as the story goes, he could not distinguish between Trombe and Tromboni? "A man's a man for a' that!"

### CHAPTER III

More musical critics of 1865-70—Howard Glover—Desmond Ryan—Sutherland Edwards—James William Davison—I make the acquaintance of Davison—His personal appearance in part wrongly described by Sir F. Burnand—Davison as a critic and as a man—He avoids a dinner trap—Walter Bache calls me a fool—Davison's opinion on that subject.

I NOW come to the central group of critics, before spoken of as acting very much under the influence of J. W. Davison. The little, but influential, coterie included Howard Glover, Desmond Ryan, Henry Sutherland Edwards, and Campbell Clarke. These, with some smaller men, were more or less intimate friends of the great critic of the *Times*, who had over them the natural and inevitable, not to say legitimate, influence which a man of marked personality and great powers must exercise upon his fellows.

Desmond Ryan, who, as far as I am aware, made no special pretension to musicianship, was for a long period critic of the *Standard*, and assistant-editor of the *Musical World*, a journal owned by Davison's brother William, and edited in chief by Davison himself. About that remarkable weekly I shall have occasion to speak later; it is only mentioned now in order to make clear the fact that the musical critic of the *Standard*

was in a position which brought him very distinctly under the influence of Davison. The two men, chief and subordinate, were thoroughly attached to each other ; their association stood the test of many years ; and only when Ryan was called away by a summons which must needs be obeyed, did it come to an end. They sometimes differed, as may be supposed, especially when Davison had gone abroad, and Ryan was left to work his will upon the *Musical World*. Davison was in Paris when Mendelssohn died, and Ryan, at his post in London, recorded the tragic event—how tragic we, at this distance of time, cannot estimate. The result was an article excellent in intention, but poor in touch, and not quite accurate as to facts. We may judge of Davison's feelings on reading his assistant's article from the tone and terms of a letter promptly despatched by him to Ryan, and inserted in the next issue of the paper. Briefly, the subordinate was set right as to facts, and desired to leave Mendelssohn to his principal.

My personal acquaintance with Desmond Ryan was slight, his death taking place shortly after I came upon the scene ; but there can be no doubt of his amiability, and no question whatever of the fact that he brought to his multifarious duties as a journalist the qualities of geniality, brightness, and aptitude which carry so many Irishmen into the high places of the press. It is worthy of note that Ryan was succeeded on the *Standard* by his son, another Desmond Ryan, since whose pre-

mature taking-off, a Ryan of the third generation found temporary place on the same important journal.<sup>1</sup>

Howard Glover, of the *Morning Post*, had made music a study, although that course was then, no more than now, regarded as essential to occupancy of the critic's chair. As a composer he obtained a measure of repute; his setting of "Tam o' Shanter" being at one time somewhat of a favourite in concert rooms, while various smaller works attracted attention and patronage. As a giver of occasional concerts, he at one time held a conspicuous place, and was bold enough to carry through a performance of Beethoven's "Pastoral" symphony with illustrative scenic effects, on the stage of Drury Lane Theatre. For this venture Glover was roundly assailed by some of his critical brethren, who, perhaps, did not know that Mendelssohn had done much the same thing. Glover, as a critic, was not a great success, though he often wrote well, and knew his subject better than most. Distrust rose like a mist between him and the world of musical readers, with the result that, whether deserved or not, his influence was undermined and his usefulness diminished. So complete was the failure, that his friends ultimately raised a sum of money, and sent the poor man and his family to America, in the hope that he might there

<sup>1</sup> An accidental circumstance deprived Ryan of his post on the *Standard* for a time, but the world has not been permitted to forget the story and it will not be retold here.

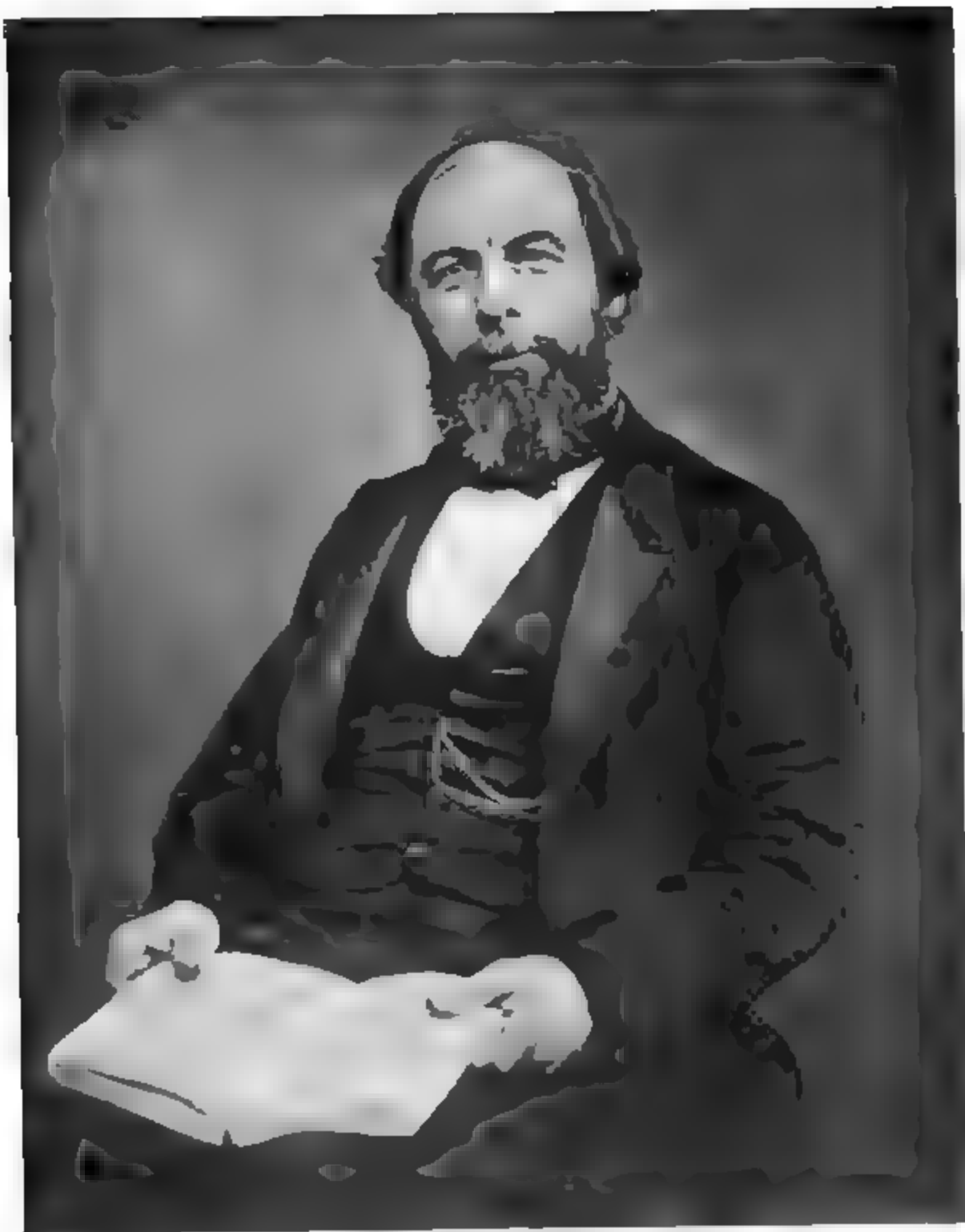
make a fresh start. But the habits of years could not be shaken off, and the only change was a change of place.

Sutherland Edwards followed Glover on the *Morning Post*. There may have been, it is true, an interregnum of Grüneison, who was always on hand, but whatever the fact, Edwards found himself in the seat vacated by the composer of "Tam o' Shanter," and remained in that position for some time. He was also a regular contributor to the *Pall Mall Gazette* in the days when the late George Smith was proprietor, and Frederic Greenwood sat in the editor's chair. Edwards was not the sole critic of the *Pall Mall*. His work was mainly confined to the opera-houses, the concert notices being written by Davison, and, a little later, by myself. I do not suppose that Edwards was very happy in his place on the *Morning Post*. The drudgery of every-day journalism, the obligation to attend unworthy concerts and write about unworthy artists, could not have been congenial. One does not cut cabbage with a Damascus blade. In the course of a few years Edwards retired from the *Morning Post*, and when the *Pall Mall Gazette* changed hands and Frederic Greenwood resigned to edit the *St James's Gazette*, Edwards followed his old chief, and remained with him to the end.

I should like to state here quite parenthetically, that on the resignation of Edwards from the *Morning Post*, Davison strenuously urged me







JAMES WILLIAM DAVISON

to offer myself as a fit and proper person to be his successor. I objected, pointing out that I never had applied for any position, and did not care to risk refusal. But my good friend insisted; made me write a letter under his own eyes, and with his own hands despatched it to the office of the journal. No notice whatever was taken of the missive; the courtesy of the *Post* did not even go so far as a formal acknowledgment. Naturally, I was vexed, and Davison received a bit of my mind for luring me into paths which I had never before trodden. The point of the story lies in the fact that the only position for which I ever asked was refused. I drew a moral from this: Don't ask; wait. I did wait; and a well-known French proverb was justified.

This inspection of the critical ranks of forty years ago shall end with further and more particular notice of James William Davison, the undisputed captain of the host. I first met him at the Crystal Palace in 1866, when Arthur Sullivan's Symphony in E minor was produced under the direction of August Manns. As the performance of this work attracted a good deal of attention beforehand, Henry Coleman accompanied me to Sydenham for the purpose of hearing it. When all was over, and we had passed out of the concert-room by a side door near the platform, Coleman nudged me and said, "Why, there is Davison!" I had never before seen the man of whom I had heard so much, and it is simple truth to say that

I was not impressed. I had imagined some such portly and imposing personage as Grüneison—some self-assertive individual with a loud voice and louder bearing. I saw a man careless as to dress, with his clothes put on anyhow, with his hair in a wild condition, and, generally, with all that goes to a man's make-up in a disarranged state. But, while less than this cannot be said, neither can I accept the description of him given by Sir Frank Burnand in his "Records and Reminiscences." Davison is there shown to us as "snuffy, untidy, dirty, unkempt." . . . As to uncleanness, Davison was no more dirty than any other man who "tubs" every morning. The other uncomplimentary epithets must no doubt be accepted, but his friends thought none the worse of him on that account. For myself, I confess that I was not attracted at first sight, but when Coleman introduced me to him, and we shook hands while I faced the keen glance of a pair of shrewd and kindly grey eyes, the unfavourable feeling vanished in a moment. We exchanged but few words amid the crowd passing from the concert-room. He asked me how I liked the symphony, and I told him that I thought it "died hard." For some reason or other he never forgot this reply, and would often repeat it in after years, apparently as some sort of explanation, though what sort I cannot imagine, of our close and abiding friendship. But my personal relations with Davison must be deferred, as I wish

to speak of him in the present connection simply as a critic, and especially as a critic who exercised upon his fellows a most powerful influence. ✓

Sir Frank Burnand says : "Where his personal likes and dislikes were not concerned, his criticisms were reliable ; but where there was a bias, then to read between his lines was an absolute necessity in order to get at anything like the truth." As far as this means that Davison's heart was sometimes stronger than his head, it is evidence which may be trusted. I have never known a man whose emotions were so powerful. In that respect, indeed, his nature was more feminine than masculine, and this may explain, perhaps, or go some way towards it, the influence he exerted over his contemporaries. His heart, it is true, was not open to everybody, and there were many who, having no opportunities of knowing the real man, deemed him cynical, and wanting in sensibility. But this was to judge him mistakenly, and to arrive at a conclusion altogether wrong. His friends, because they knew him, formed a very different opinion, and thought so much of him as a man, that they often hesitated to differ from him as a critic. But be that as it may, the opinions of Davison were those which some of his colleagues found pleasure in expressing as their own. They seemed to be shielded from responsibility under the shadow of a powerful as well as a sympathetic personality. By way of illustrating the very sensitive qualities of Davison, I here reproduce a letter ✓

received from him on the occasion of a dangerous illness in my family. It speaks very convincingly for itself.

“WINKS’, *October 30, 1880*

“DEAR FRIEND BENNETT,—I most deeply regret to hear that you have had such sickness in your house. Need I say that had I known it I should not have written to you or bothered you in any way. I am glad to hear from Thomas that things are likely to improve—are in fact improving—and God knows that you have my earnest wishes for your dear girl’s speedy restoration to health. With love to your wife and hearty greetings to your clever son,—Believe me, as always, yours with true attachment,

J. W. DAVISON

“I am really most anxious to hear some good news from you; and should you come across Bill, just tell him a word of comfort which he will immediately communicate to me by letter.”

✓ Such a man as the writer of the above had the secret of influence upon those to whom he opened his heart.

✓ It was the same human quality which made him crave for sympathy from others. The interior of his house was almost inaccessible, being carefully guarded by a dragon-housekeeper, yet nothing pleased him more than to know that persons of eminence in music had tried to gain an interview. I will cite a case in point. When Dr von Bülow first came to this country for the purpose of giving

pianoforte recitals he did not call upon Davison, as was customary. No doubt he had been assured by the coterie which promptly gathered around him that Davison never praised any pianist other than his own wife, and a considerable time elapsed before the two men came into contact. I did not know of their meeting till shortly after the event, at which time I saw reason to ask my friend if Von Bülow had called upon him, adding : " I gather from something I read in the *Musical World*, that you now admire him as a pianist." The reply was to the effect that the famous artist had called, and that Davison had found him an interesting man. My remark upon this was simply : " Ah ! yes, now I understand." It appears that the coterie above referred to then felt themselves encouraged to attempt the capture of Davison, to whom Von Bülow gave a dinner, inviting also certain members of the clique. Davison accepted the invitation and the dinner took place. I was not informed of the event beforehand, but very shortly afterwards Davison mentioned the matter to me, and made it appear that the attempt to annex him had overreached itself. According to the " guest of the evening," the after-dinner talk turned, I can only suppose for a moment, upon the humble writer of these " Recollections." But the moment was long enough for Walter Bache to say : " Oh, Bennett is a fool ! " This was altogether too much for my friend, who sharply retorted. Davison, always staunch to me, was really hurt, and the trap to

catch him failed. Not long afterwards I received from "J. W. D." a characteristic letter in which the matter was again mentioned, and I now transcribe it for the sake of such interest as it may still retain :—

"FRIDAY, *October 24*

"DEAR J. B.

. . . . .

✓ Your Liszt article beats my famous Birmingham one into fits. It is a model of quiet irony, worthy the author of 'Gulliver' and 'A Tale of a Tub'; and W. Bache, who, at Bülow's famous dinner given me at Verrey's, said you were a 'fool,' can (or could if he had the ordinary amount of perception accorded even to the mild idiotymus fool) have felt its point, have detected the 'fool' he had to deal with, and understood how the successive sentences were brought to 'the finest issues.' Proceed, proceed, I pray thee in using 'the trenchant pen with which Nature has endowed you,' and rejoice the heart of your dilapidated and sold-up J. W."

✓ This was written at a time when the star of Franz Hueffer was in the ascendant at the *Times* office, and Davison's light was waning.

I may explain that Bache had no love for me, because I failed to recognise as a great composer his friend and master, Franz Liszt.

The musical critics to whom I have referred in



this chapter and that preceding were men of mature years. All were my seniors, and between some of them and myself lay a considerable space of time. There seemed in those days to be an extraordinary lack of candidates for the critical chair. The trouble was for an editor to find any young man worth engaging, and it must be said for the young men that they showed no desire to be engaged. How great the difference in this respect, as in so many others, between then and now! The London journals of that day were comparatively few, and there seemed to be, together with lack of opportunity for candidates, a deterring absence of financial attraction. The pay was by no means great, and the living to be got from this branch of journalism allowed few luxuries. The general conditions, however, rather favoured me than otherwise. I stood almost alone as representing a new generation of musical critics, and the result, though not surprising, under the circumstances just described, often gave me a sense of bewilderment—it seemed too good to be true. Yet the fact is—so much was a new pen desired—that within five years from the appearance of my first concert notice, I became critic of the *Sunday Times*, the *Graphic*, the *Pictorial Times*, and the *Daily Telegraph*, as well as being a regular contributor to the *Musical Standard*, the *Musical World*, and the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Nearly all these posts I held at one and the same time. The work was enormous, but so was my love of it. I

1865

still look back with astonishment at the rush of engagements which followed my appearance on the scene, and I attribute much of this to the curious and, since then, unexampled dearth of writers to whom editors cared to offer a post.

## CHAPTER IV

John Goss, Organist of St Paul's—His gentle nature—"Grandson" of Mozart—Goss and Sidney Smith—The Children's Service in St Paul's—Sherry and biscuits—Goss composes music for the Thanksgiving Service of the Prince of Wales—His knighthood—Dr S. S. Wesley—As conductor and organist—As a cathedral reformer—Eccentric behaviour—A wild scheme—Correspondence regarding it—Sir W. S. Bennett—His retiring disposition—An unpleasant dinner—An anecdote—Correspondence with J. L. Hatton.

**I** TURN now to the composers, more or less eminent, whose acquaintance I made during the earlier years of my work as a critic, and because I knew John Goss at a time long anterior to my entering upon that work, he here takes the first place.

I quite easily recall the form and features of this excellent and gifted man. His face was homely; he seemed to beam with benevolence, and he possessed the virtue of modesty almost in excess. He had a uniformly gentle way with him; never asserted himself, nor made it appear that his abilities and achievements entitled him to homage. As a musician, he was one of the old fashion, and would gossip by the hour about such composers and performers as he counted heroic. He would sometimes point out to me that, as a pupil of Attwood, who was himself a pupil of Mozart, he

ranked in the musical family as a grandson of the illustrious master. In speaking of Mozart, he never wearied, and took great delight in showing to his friends Attwood's exercises, and Mozart's corrections. He handled these papers almost with reverence, and in turning over the pages his cheeks would flush, and his eyes gleam with the fire of enthusiasm. He could tell many a humorous tale of the musicians who had gone before him. One story, he was very fond of narrating, albeit the hero of it had nothing to do with music. Goss having occasion to attend a meeting of the Chapter of St Paul's, found there, amongst other members, Canon Sidney Smith. As usual, the organist wanted something done to the organ, and was laying his case before the reverend gentlemen, when the witty Canon intervened with a question. "Can you tell me, Mr Goss, why an organist is like an old cab-horse?" I can imagine the look of Goss, good simple man, as he turned his spectacles upon the questioner. After a moment's thought, Goss shook his head, saying, "No, Mr Smith, I don't think I can." "Well," replied the famous humourist, "It is just this way: an organist is like an old cab-horse because he is always wanting another stop!" The laugh that followed put the Chapter in a good humour, and Goss obtained what he desired. He had many stories of Sidney Smith, but as they are not musical, they must now be passed.

In 1868 the annual meeting of the London

Charity Children under the dome of St Paul's had not been abolished, and there are, of course, many living who can recall the aspect of the cathedral on those occasions. Thousands of boys and girls, in the queer and varied dresses which parochial benevolence affected with a view to promote the self-respect of its young charges, sat on tiers of seats rising from the floor to the top of the arches. It was a wonderful sight to look upon ; it inspired the muse of William Blake, and drew all London, as far as all London could be accommodated in the great cathedral. But the eye was not the only organ appealed to, for the multitudinous little ones had always been carefully trained to take part in certain portions of the musical service. They sang, for instance, the simpler passages in Handel's "Coronation Anthem," parts of the Old Hundredth Psalm, the tune (Hanover) sung to "O praise ye the Lord," and a florid chant known as "Jones in D." The effect of thousands of fresh, childish voices was unique, and it is said that on hearing it, Haydn was moved to tears. At these services the ordinary choir—a very poor one at that time—was augmented by numerous voices gathered from outside, and for several years in succession my own voice was one of those called upon. Before me lies the printed invitation which Goss was in the habit of sending out to his helping friends. It says, after stating the day and hour of the service :—

"Will you kindly inform me if you can assist in

the choir, and provide a surplice on that occasion? if so, a ticket of admission to the Cathedral will be forwarded to you, and it must be retained by you as a pass-ticket to the choir-gallery. You are requested to be in the Minor Canons' vestry by eleven precisely, to put on your surplice and receive instructions."

I could not provide a surplice, but there was always one for me, and in that garb of purity I did my duty. Another critic was always present at the Children's Service. I refer to "J. W. D.," who did not put on a surplice, but remained in the shelter of the curtains which concealed the organist. The duty of that official was shared by Goss and George Cooper, his assistant. It is to be noted that the more difficult parts of the service were usually taken by Cooper, and Goss, when liberated, would give a sign to Davison and myself, both of us being on the alert for it. Having us in tow, so to speak, he would lead the way to a small door admitting within the organ case, the instrument then in use being the huge "Kist o' Whistles" built some years before for the Panopticon in Leicester Square, bought by the Dean and Chapter, and placed in a special gallery erected over the south door. Once inside the case, and secure from observation, a bottle of sherry was gravely produced by the gentle and hospitable organist. There were glasses, of course, and also biscuits. So, while the anthem, the multitudinous voices, and the

thundering organ tones rang through the Cathedral, we three refreshed the inner man. This was an annual ceremony, invariable in character and procedure, and enjoyed by none more thoroughly than by the founder of the feast. As sherry and biscuits are not chicken and champagne, I suppose no one will call it a case of bribery. An occurrence like this is, of course, impossible now, but the discipline of St Paul's forty years ago was exceedingly lax.

Another matter with which Goss was intimately connected comes to my mind. It may be in the recollection of some that Goss composed special music for the Thanksgiving Service at St Paul's after the recovery of the Prince of Wales (his present Majesty) from his dangerous illness. The music referred to was so successful, so full of the purity and tenderness which distinguish his compositions, that some mark of royal appreciation was naturally expected. This, however, did not immediately follow, and I made bold to call for it in the leading columns of the *Daily Telegraph*. As in such cases there is nothing like insistence, I insisted (supported by others), and at length it came to my knowledge on the 8th or 9th of February, 1872, that Goss was to receive the accolade. On February 10th, that being Saturday, I went down to the Crystal Palace as usual, and crossing the transept met the organist of St Paul's. "Good afternoon, Sir John," was my greeting. The little man looked at me wonder-

ingly, and said, "I am not Sir John. You are joking with me." And even when I told him to postpone his judgment on me as a trustworthy informant, he remained puzzled and unconvinced. So we parted. On Monday I received from him the subjoined letter :—

"MY DEAR MR BENNETT,—I yesterday found a letter from Mr Gladstone, dated the 8th inst., awaiting me at the Cathedral, saying that he had sincere pleasure in informing me that he is permitted by H.M. to offer me the honour of knighthood. So that it is now a verity.

"I answered, of course, that I accepted the honour, etc., etc. ; but I have not yet heard again. Probably my ceremony will be private, and if so, I shall like it all the better. I am very grateful to you, and the other good friends, who have so generously served me in the matter ; and, in all truth, I wish I had felt able to do the required work in a worthier way.

"I would have written in the morning, but had forgotten your address. To-night my daughter told me you had given it to her on Saturday.—  
Ever yours faithfully, JOHN GOSS

It happened that the first musical festival I attended as a professed critic was that of 1865, at Gloucester, and then, also, I first set eyes on Samuel Sebastian Wesley. I was familiar with much of his music, and held it in the highest admiration. Naturally, therefore, the man became



to me an object of profound interest, and I soon discovered that he would repay study, should opportunity for that process ever present itself. But I did not make his acquaintance till 1868. I was a stranger at the Festival of 1865, knowing nobody, and, as a very modest beginner, seeking nobody to know. I did, however, gather up some material by which ever to remember the principal, and, as I thought at the time, most puzzling figure on the Festival platform. For example, I saw Wesley conduct Mendelssohn's pianoforte Concerto in G Minor. Arabella Goddard was the soloist, and Blagrove held the first violin. The music went on well enough in such accustomed hands as those of the pianist and the "leader," the Doctor's beat being little regarded—a circumstance which did not appear to trouble him. Gradually Wesley's face lightened and beamed. The music having hold of him, presently took entire possession. He swayed from side to side; he put down the baton, treated himself to a pinch of snuff with an air of exquisite enjoyment, and then sat motionless, listening. Meanwhile Blagrove conducted with his violin-bow.

In 1868, after seeing the Doctor start "Elijah" without a baritone, I had the privilege of shaking hands with the erratic conductor in his own house, my introducer being J. W. Davison.

Dr Wesley was for many years an advocate of reform in cathedral management. As far back as 1849, the date of his removal from Leeds Parish

Church to Winchester Cathedral, he published a pamphlet entitled, "A few Words on Cathedral Music and the Musical System of the Church, with a Plan of Reform." The idea of working out the changes advocated in the "Few Words" never left him, as I can testify.

My story begins in 1875, when I was the editor of a weekly musical journal known as *Concordia*. Thinking it desirable to publish cathedral service-lists, I wrote to the various organists asking them to forward copies to my office week by week. Most of them consented cheerfully, but Dr Wesley answered as an angry man answers. Thus ran his letter :—

"DEAR SIR,—I hope you will be kind enough to prevent the paper *Concordia* being sent to me. I return the number to you which was sent me here this morning, to show the person who took the obtrusive liberty of sending it that I have *not opened* it. I should have hoped that I deserved being spared the intricate efforts to injure me that one or two writers in London persist in making use of, on the score of the high path I have ever tried to keep in musical affairs, and certainly I could not have supposed that you would allow a paper to issue which was meant wilfully to injure my reputation and position. I trust you will oblige me by issuing an order to prevent the paper being sent to me again.—I am, Yours very truly,

"S. S. WESLEY"

I sat in amazement before that letter. My request was an ordinary one; it was couched in friendly terms, and neither *Concordia*, then only a few weeks old, nor its editor had said a word in disparagement of the Gloucester organist. Evidently something was wrong beneath the surface; and what was wrong I knew would one day come out. So, ignoring the grievance and its expression, I wrote again, asking the Doctor to permit his assistant to forward the lists. The reply to my second letter showed the grievance plainly enough. I omit the first two paragraphs as not bearing on the matter, and begin at the third :—

“ April 8th, 1875

. . . . .

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I am opposed to the publication of the lists you ask for. They are made out by young clerical precentors. The music in question is chiefly bad trash, and there is no professional knowledge amongst the parties concerned. The selections inflict a martyrdom on true artists. I don't think any respectable paper would insert them without exposing their error and the system which brings them into existence.”

Here I omit some passages which are of private interest only. The letter ended as follows :—

“ Do let me say I am very, very sorry you are going to patronise precentors by accepting their vile (I do say) lists of music, which are chiefly an

affront to everything traditionally good. If you *will have* the lists, I will tell a pupil to send them you. 'For this,' amongst the rest, 'am I ordained.'  
—Very truly yours, S. S. WESLEY"

So I got the lists, and got at the grievance. The clerical precentor, with a power superior to his own, was Wesley's *bête-noir*—so much his *bête-noir* that he felt it an insult when a request for the precentor's "vile lists" was preferred, though done in perfect innocence, and absolute ignorance of the good Doctor's strong feeling.

I have a third letter on this subject. It bears the date of April 26, 1875, and it begins with some further remarks on sending the lists, because "in a cathedral a man must move as cautiously as possible." The Doctor then returns to a favourite position of astonishment and regret: "I must repeat briefly," he says, "that I think a good musical paper would not descend to put its stamp and seal to that which is so intrinsically wrong, and indicative of a most abject state of things as regards the most vital interests of a Church musician. Such a man may be even a more deserving person than the Dean, and yet has but a Lazarus position!"

The idea of the Doctor sitting in rags at the gate of the Deanery, with the very reverend gentleman's dogs in suspicious proximity, is almost too funny. Wesley winds up his letter with another rap on my knuckles, and a final remark on the lists:—

“You are dealing with this subject—pardon me—as though it were a child’s plaything. But the lists will be sent you punctually by one of my deputies, only I beg you not to give our names.”

All the foregoing is but a preliminary to a disclosure by the Doctor of a scheme for the reform of cathedral administration.

Later in the year 1875 than the dates before given, I received from the Doctor a letter asking me to dine with him at the Norfolk Hotel, not far from Paddington Station. He had something important to say to me. I accepted as a matter of course, and found Wesley ensconced in a private room, with the table laid for two. The meal ended, and the waiter having cleared away not only the dinner things but himself also, my *vis-à-vis* entered upon business.

He enlarged upon the wastefulness of the existing government of cathedrals, and especially upon the unfair and unworthy position, both as regards status and salary, which it assigned the Church musicians. He held that the time had come for a resolute campaign against such abuses. I answered that I had not gone into the question of cathedral administration, but was quite willing to believe that, like most old institutions, it required bringing up to date. Would the Doctor confide to me the principal points in his scheme of reform? The Doctor would and did.

He held that it was useless to attempt amendment of control by Dean and Chapter, and his first

proposition was one which would have warmed the heart of the famous "Cobbler of Gloucester." He would sweep away all Deans and Chapters with the besom of destruction! I suggested that this was rather a "large order." He agreed, but was not every reform, at its inception, a "large order"? How would the Doctor, having suppressed Deans and Chapters, govern cathedrals? He explained: through a resident clergyman, acting as the rector of a parish church, and having under him a "sort of curate," *if necessary*. As for the music, it should be absolutely under the control of the organist; and as for effective preaching, it should be supplied by a Cathedral Board sitting in London, and having at its command a number of the most eloquent orators of the Church; these to go individually the round of the cathedrals, preaching a month at each, and then making way for another. But how does the Doctor propose to set about this reform? With what cry will he go to the country? These queries were answered in a letter, dated November 7, 1875:—

"I should hope the desire to make better use of so large a sum of money (as the endowments of the cathedrals) may serve, especially as this money supports offices which are absolutely obstructive to musical interests. . . . I know several persons there (in Parliament) who will encourage all efforts in this direction, and although Nonconformists don't attack the Church, they will be sure to vote for an alteration of the kind in prospect."

Finally, Wesley said: "You work the press; I will attend to the Parliament." I promised to consider the matter, the upshot being a letter from me to him in which it was intimated that I had no time for enterprises of the speculative sort proposed. I fancy the Doctor thought nothing of me afterwards. At any rate, I have no further letter from him on that subject, or any other.

Wesley is dead, and his cathedral reform project has perished with him, but his music remains, and that is the better part.

Before dismissing the distinguished Church musician, I should like to show him in a lighter mood. Wesley, accustomed to excite the humour of others, was not deficient in the article himself, and could at times play off a joke upon his friends. On the Saturday of the Festival week at Gloucester (1868), all the music being ended, and all who helped to make it at rest from their labours, myself and a friend ventured upon a visit to the conductor-organist, and found him at home in the old house which was once the residence of Robert Raikes. After some desultory chat, the Doctor was begged to go into the cathedral and play to us anything he pleased. It was a bold request, for the poor man must have been suffering more or less from fatigue. He protested that he could not play if he would, and that he would not if he could; but the chance of hearing him was too good to be lost, and we pressed him hard. In the end, and perhaps thinking that assent was the quickest

way to get rid of us, he agreed to go into the cathedral, sent for the blowers, flung off his slippers, put on a pair of thin boots, and led the way, keys in hand. "Mind," said he, "you are not to come up into the gallery with me. You are to go and sit on the steps leading to the altar rails, and wait there until I have finished." We took up our positions forthwith, but as he turned to the foot of the gallery stairs, the Doctor cried out: "Mind, I can't play; haven't touched the organ for months, and the instrument is in a very bad state." With this damper upon our expectations, Wesley began his display. There was a great deal of noise with the stops—ungainly things, as long as a man's forearm—and the Doctor started upon one of Bach's fugues. He made a bad beginning, stopped and shouted to us: "I told you I couldn't play!" "Never mind, Doctor, go on." Another attempt ended much as did the first, after which we called out: "Extemporise, Doctor." We could hear him grumbling, but in a minute or two he began, and soon got into the mood. His performance was lengthy, but quite magnificent. My companion had heard Mendelssohn extemporise, and even he, with such a comparison to make, expressed his astonishment at the Doctor's wonderful resources. The organ became silent after a fugal climax, and we waited for more. We waited long, so long that we feared something had happened. What had happened was this: The Doctor had crept behind the front of the gallery, stooping



so that he was not visible below; then silently descended the stairs, and, giving word to the blowers, left the cathedral. We called again and again, and there was no reply. We returned to the organist's house, and found our runaway once more in his slippers, and chuckling over the little joke he had played upon us. But for the sake of that extemporaneous performance, we would have put up with twenty jokes. Dr Wesley's plea that the organ in Gloucester Cathedral was out of repair is supported by my own recollection of that instrument, and by a letter which the organist addressed to some person, probably the chapter clerk, who had written to him on behalf of the Dean and his colleagues.

*"June 29, 1869*

"DEAR SIR,—I have received your letter about the Cathedral organ, wherein you say that there can be no outlay which is not indispensable at the present time.

"I was aware that, at the present time, it was quite unreasonable to request to have anything done to the organ but what was indispensable, and I am ready to appeal to any competent organist as to the propriety and absolute necessity of what has been suggested. We cannot go on playing the organ without some change.

"We are liable at any moment to get into trouble with the choir, and this is most painful, for when a difference arises the members of the chapter do not know who is right and who is wrong.

“ My nerves are too feeble to bear this. I am ready to give up all desire to win approbation, but what I point to is insupportable.—I am, faithfully yours,  
S. S. WESLEY ”

Poor Doctor ! It is not surprising that he wished to abolish Deans and Chapters.

A more distinguished musician even than Wesley was William Sterndale Bennett. I had the honour of his acquaintance and friendship during the last nine years of his life—that is to say, from 1866, when he became Principal of the Royal Academy of Music, to his death in 1875. Yet we seldom met—a not unusual circumstance in the rush and swirl of London life. During these closing years, Sterndale Bennett, naturally of a retiring disposition, seemed to have shut his doors upon the world. I never but once saw him at a concert, apart from those of the Royal Academy of Music. He would not conduct any performances of his own compositions, and beyond attention to his duties at the Royal Academy, musical circles saw little or nothing of him. How different this from the active and happy earlier period of his career, when symphonies, concertos, overtures, pianoforte pieces, and what not else, flowed from his pen, and he was the young favourite, in Germany, of such men as Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Ferdinand Hiller. How can the falling off in his mature years be explained ? I do not attempt an explanation, but the fact is that practically he ceased to

compose in the later sixties, when the "Woman of Samaria," the music to the "Ajax" of Sophocles, and a pianoforte sonata, "The Maid of Orleans," were brought out.

Curiously enough, I more often met Sterndale Bennett in Lord's Cricket Ground than in the halls of the Muses. Like myself, he was fond of watching the game, and unlike me, he could reach the ground in a few minutes from his house, a modest residence known as 66 St John's Wood Road, but called "Sterndale Lodge" after his death. Over the site of the house the trains of the Great Central Railway now pass to and fro. I recall one memorable evening spent in that vanished abode. Sir Sterndale, with two or three friends and myself, dined at the house of a man living in the neighbourhood, and the occasion was not a success, owing to the ill humour of the hostess. We broke up very early, and adjourned in a body to Sterndale Bennett's place, where there was companionship without perturbation. As we were all more or less musical, Bennett did not play—he seldom did in those days—but he was in capital spirits and such charming company that I understood perfectly the fascination he exercised in his youth. He had a pretty wit on occasion. When listening to the "Tannhäuser" overture at Hanover Square Rooms in 1855, Wagner himself conducting, he exclaimed to some friends near at hand, "Why, this is Brummagem Berlioz!" There could not have been a more apt and pithy expres-

sion of the feeling of the time with regard to Wagner and his music.

In one of his letters Mozart states that he played the pianoforte part in a new concerto without having written it out. Sterndale Bennett supplies a parallel case. In 1874 I wanted some information regarding a caprice in E major for pianoforte and orchestra, composed by him at an early period. In answer to my application came the following letter :—

"66 ST JOHN'S WOOD ROAD,  
Nov. 6, 1874

"MY DEAR MR BENNETT,—. . . With regard to my caprice, I really cannot remember much. It was first played by me at one of my benefit concerts at the Hanover Rooms—how many years ago I am afraid to say. I played it at Leipzig, and afterwards sold it to the publishers there. When I sent them the score, they found out that I had omitted the pianoforte part, which, in fact, I had never written.

"The score you shall see, if you think it will be of any use in the kind interest you take in the work. The last time I heard it at the Philharmonic, it was played by Miss Kate Loder (now Lady Thompson), and conducted by Costa—long after our misunderstanding.—Ever sincerely yours,  
WILLIAM STERNDALÉ BENNETT"

Sir Sterndale died on the first day of February 1875, aged fifty-nine. I attended his funeral in





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Westminster Abbey, and still have strong upon me the impression made by the scene as the coffin, covered with costly flowers, was borne, shoulder high, up the nave, accompanied by the solemn harmonies of Croft and Purcell's burial music, and seeming to draw into itself all the light there was in the sacred building. They sang over the dead composer his own exquisite "God is a Spirit," from the "Woman of Samaria," and then laid him to rest in the Musicians' Corner, almost side by side with another gifted English master, Henry Purcell. Having won them solely by merit, and in no degree by wirepulling, Bennett died possessed of all the honours to which a musician can aspire. He was a Cambridge Master of Arts and Doctor of Music, as well as Principal of the Royal Academy, and a Knight.

I was well acquainted with John Liphot Hatton, known by his friends as "Jack" Hatton, and sometimes as "the Sultan," on account of his patriarchal beard. Hatton had no regular musical education, and was almost entirely self-taught, but he cherished high aspirations. He wrote operas, which failed, and one oratorio, which is as dead as the dodo. It was called "Hezekiah," and came to a hearing at the Crystal Palace about 1877. Though in no wise remarkable, many pleasant things were said of it, and Hatton, encouraged thereby, had thoughts of giving "Hezekiah" a successor. He came to me for a libretto, and I

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agreed to provide him with one, on a biblical subject, which, sad to say, I have entirely forgotten. This was in the late summer of 1878. In February 1879, I received from Hatton the following letter :—

“MARGATE, 9th February 1879

“MY DEAR BENNETT,—I am about, I fear, to astonish you, perhaps to cause you some annoyance. The fact is, so many friends have been at me with their objections to attempting in these days so serious a work as an oratorio, and begging me to attack something of lighter character, that I begin to feel half afraid of the larger work. They one and all say, ‘Nothing to be got for an oratorio ; few chances of such things being played,’ and so on.

“Friend X (mentioning a still-living singer) is particularly against my doing so—‘that I ought not to be bothering my brains with oratorio.’ All this is very uncomfortable, and if it has not quite knocked me off my perch, has made me feel very shaky. Now for it! You know I am rather inclined to comic opera ; can you—will you help me to one? There! now the murder’s out! Will you drive those old Arab steeds out of your head, and lend a helping hand to pull me out of the mud I feel myself sticking in? I have no courage left to say anything more, feeling I have been bravely impertinent in saying so much, which please pardon, and believe me,—Yours faithfully,

“J. L. HATTON”



In reply, I begged Hatton not to distress himself on my account. I further said that his friends had counselled him wisely, and that comic opera was out of my line. Hatton lives, and will continue to live, in his beautiful part-songs, and in many solo-songs which have become a national possession—such, for example, as “To Anthea,” “The Leather Bottel,” and “Simon the Cellarer.” These, compared with oratorio, are small things, but they are good of their kind, and to be desired; for art, like Providence, fulfils itself in many ways. Hatton would sometimes sing his own songs. I remember his coming to my house one evening, on business connected with the proposed oratorio, which business transacted, he sat down to the pianoforte and sang, “The Merry Little Grey Fat Man,” with such effect, that whether our shouts of laughter or his music were the more audible in the road without, it would have been very hard to say. Dear old “Jack!” He was a musician of a merry, rough and ready sort; “a hey-fellow-well-met;” a kind of musical Yorick, who knew how to set the table in a roar. Needless to say, he has no successor. Musical men are all very serious nowadays, having more than enough to do in propounding, or trying to solve, impossible art-problems. Hatton died at Margate in September 1886.

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## CHAPTER V

Sir Michael Costa—His rapid rise as a conductor—His personal qualities—A tamer of the orchestra—Costa's rare smile—His limitations as a conductor—A defeated intrigue—John Delane—Costa's hospitality to J. W. Davison and Arabella Goddard—My analysis of his "Eli"—Costa's appreciation thereof—I become acquainted with Julius Benedict—A story of the libretto of his "St Peter"—Chorley's wrath and Benedict's fear—A paper war.

THE present generation knows little of Michael Costa, but in his day he, as a musician, filled a large space, and did no mean work, albeit we now declare his ideals to have been imperfect. How he came from his native Italy as the bearer to a Birmingham Festival of a composition by his master Zingarelli; how, on the same occasion, he appeared as a tenor vocalist in small parts; how, settling in London, he seized the conductor's baton and worked his way to the front rank of his order—all this belongs to biography, and need not be enlarged upon here. In 1865, when I first became familiar with his doings, though not with himself, he was conductor at the Royal Italian Opera, ✓ director of the concerts given by the Sacred ✓ Harmonic Society, and commander-in-chief of the forces engaged at the Handel Festivals in the Crystal Palace. As a conductor, he could hardly rise higher than these three posts lifted him. It is, of course, well known that before the period just

spoken of, he had conducted the Philharmonic Society's concerts, and written two oratorios, an opera, a ballet, and other works more or less important in intention. I think, however, that he accomplished most for art through his influence upon the orchestra of his day. There was hardly any discipline on the platform where sat the instrumental performers of more than forty years ago. These gentlemen did pretty much as they liked, and in the matter of respect for, and obedience to, the wielder of the baton, they certainly could not boast. If they boasted at all, it was the other way about, for not even Mendelssohn, despite his personal charm and high distinction, could bend them to his will or secure decent order. Costa—let us give him credit for it—put an end to all that. He set himself to raise the English orchestra from the condition of a concourse of atoms to that of a homogeneous body, subordinate to one will, and that will his own. The typical conductor of the day was often a poor creature, with no real qualifications for leadership—a fact perfectly well known to his men. When Costa came the men recognised a master, who, through force of capacity and will, sought to secure, by rigid justice, the respect even of those who suffered from it. He himself set an example of strict discipline. Insisting upon punctuality in others, Costa took care to be punctual himself. Demanding serious attention to the work in hand, he never relaxed in the discharge of his own duties. He knew, moreover,

how to command, and how to show himself a friend of those he ruled. In battles with managers, he acted as the leader of his men, and if, when they offended, there was little hope of escaping reprimand, there was equally small chance of being overlooked if they deserved approbation. His manner has been described as stern ; it was rather one of calm dignity, which at times apparently became impassiveness. Only on very rare occasions could a performance under Costa be charged with ✓ carelessness, and those occasions were, as a rule, connected with works which he cordially disliked. He had all a Southern Italian's strength of feeling. Passionately loving Rossini, and the masters of his own country, as was natural, he hated with no less intensity some other composers who shocked his sense of the true in art. In this, however, he by no means stood alone. Every conductor has his partialities, and they inevitably show themselves, though not often with such ostentation as when Wagner, at a Philharmonic concert, put on gloves to conduct a work of Mendelssohn, taking them off ✓ when he had done, and throwing them on the ground. Rare exceptions apart, whatever Costa's hand found to do, was done with all his might. Sometimes he did too much.

✓ No one, I take it, will ever write a chapter on Costa's "readings." His work was practically over when the modern conductor, charged with the duty of evolving new ideas from old texts, made his appearance. Costa had no such mission. He read

the music, and reading nothing into it, was there-with content. Even thus he often secured splendid performances. Granted that his tactics were as old-fashioned as those at Waterloo—"The French came on in the old way," said the Duke, "and we beat them back in the old way,"—the result was often as conclusive as Wellington's victory.

Nobody will deny this who can remember the effect of the overture to "William Tell," when played under Costa at a Birmingham Festival. For dash, precision, unity of feeling and spirit, and for tonal magnificence, that effect has never been surpassed.

I have devoted none too much space to him who did for the English orchestra what Carnot accomplished for the French revolutionary levies—to him who "organised victory." Costa stood at the first parting of the ways in the path of orchestral music amongst us, and though he may not have gone far, he led in the right direction. He had his faults as a musician, but his virtues lifted himself and those under him from the following of an employment to the discharge of a vocation. So he prepared the way for others coming after him, and made lighter their work.

Costa had the reputation of being an austere man, and he certainly held himself aloof from his fellow-musicians. He was accustomed, during the years in which he lay open to my observation, to invite J. W. Davison and his wife, Madame Arabella Goddard, to an annual dinner at his house in

Eccleston Square, but this hospitality, like Christmas, never came oftener than once a year. He may have been no less friendly with Grüneison and Dr Cox, his thick-and-thin supporters in the press, but of this I cannot speak from knowledge. Why he favoured Mr and Mrs Davison so regularly and in such a measured degree I do not know, nor, perhaps, did the Davisons themselves know.

Years before the time of which I now speak an attempt was made to bring about a rupture between Davison and the authorities in Printing House Square. The leaders in this intrigue were, according to Davison, Michael Costa, John Ella, Dr Cox, and some few others, whose names it is not worth while to mention. To bring matters to a crisis, a deputation, of which the men above named formed part, waited on John Delane, the editor of the paper, and laid their complaints before him. Delane heard patiently what they had to say, and when all had been said, rose from his chair remarking: "Well, gentlemen, I have carefully listened to your observations, and now have only to say that I think it will be better for you to let me manage the *Times* in my own way. I wish you good morning." So ended the assault, and the deputation retreated in confusion. It may have been—I like to think so, at any rate—that Costa's annual hospitality to Davison was an act of expiation.

I came only once into personal relations with this seemingly austere man. In view of a festival

at Glasgow, which he was to conduct, and at which his first oratorio, "Eli," was to be performed, the committee of the festival requested me to prepare an analysis of the work. I did so, as far as possible appreciatively, but sometimes in a spirit of irony to be sought "between the lines." I attended the festival, during which I was the guest of Thomas Stillie, amateur musical critic of the *Glasgow Herald*. One day Costa, driving down to a rehearsal, stopped before the house in which Stillie had a flat, descended from his carriage, and laboured slowly up the semi-public staircase. My host and myself were considerably astonished at the advent of such an unwonted visitor, and the thought occurred to me that Costa had detected my irony and had come to "have it out." His card was brought in, and the chief himself speedily followed. He had, in fact, paid his visit, and toiled up that long and painful staircase in order specially to thank me for what I had done on behalf of his work. People easily see what they wish to see. The dignified conductor had failed in detecting the half-hidden vein of irony, and expressed an all-comprehending admiration and gratitude. I do not mind confessing that I was relieved by this courtesy, and more than a little sorry that the whole of it was not deserved. Our business with each other being ended, Costa, with graciousness yet unsatisfied, invited me to accompany him to the hall, where we parted. The parting, as it proved, was final.

I first became acquainted with Julius Benedict at the Norwich Festival of 1866, which he conducted, as he did others before and some after. I had resolved to put in an appearance thereat, but this purpose was not easily carried out. There were obstacles in the way. My proprietor (Seale) was willing to receive Festival copy, but not to pay for it; I knew, therefore, that if I went to Norwich, I must work for nothing and meet expenses out of my own meagre exchequer. With a true instinct I, nevertheless, held fast to my purpose, and an application for tickets was duly made by the *Sunday Times* office. The reply came in the form of a refusal, the secretary writing that the paper was not on the list of journals to which free admission was granted. This check troubled me not at all. On the last day of rehearsal I appeared in the East Anglian city, accompanied by a musician (name now forgotten) whom I met in the train. My new friend offered to introduce me to the conductor, but Davison did this service, mentioning at the same time that the journal I represented had been refused the usual courtesy. Benedict, whose respect for the press, the minnows as well as the Tritons, never allowed him to make a mistake of that kind, gave me a cordial handshake, saying, "What nonsense! I will soon set that right," and set right it was, almost on the instant. Thus pleasantly began an acquaintance which soon ripened into friendship, and in that form continued to the end of Benedict's career



(1885). The most salient incident in the twenty-one years so passed had to do with the oratorio "St Peter," written by Benedict for the Birmingham Festival of 1870, and duly produced in the course of that celebration. On the title-page of the work, the composer's name is "writ large"; that of the librettist does not appear at all, and with the omission a curious story is connected.

In June 1869, I received from Benedict a letter out of which I take the following :—

"I do not know whether you are aware that my oratorio, 'St Peter,' has been accepted by the Birmingham Festival Committee. This decision must yet be kept secret, but I am, as you may well imagine, most anxious about my libretto, which has been compiled by Chorley from the Scriptures, *but which does not satisfy me the least*. Will you give me your aid to rewrite it in part, without appearing? Pray, do give your assent, and let me know, at your earliest convenience, whether, and on what terms, you would kindly undertake this troublesome labour."

Why Benedict sought my aid in this matter I do not know. I had previously attempted no work of the kind, but was disposed to undertake the task, moved by a confident spirit which my brother-critics, any one of whom could no doubt have done the work much better, united to cast out of me. Only one consideration brought pause. I asked myself whether it was right to make changes in a man's work without his consent, without even his

knowledge, and, being doubtful, I put the question to Benedict. He assured me that Chorley's libretto had been bought and paid for (eighty guineas was the sum named), and that the purchaser was free to do with it as he pleased. As I still hesitated, though strongly tempted, Benedict added that if the "book" was not revised, he would throw it aside; set music to it he would not. Finally, after consulting Davison and others of far larger experience than myself, I agreed to undertake the work.

Chorley's libretto will not be criticised here. Hard upon forty years have passed since I saw it, and I might do the author an injustice. What remains to me as an assured memory is that I wondered not at the action of Benedict in rejecting it, and that for my own part, I determined to rewrite nearly the whole, retaining only the opening scene, in which John the Baptist played an effective part. Chorley was, of course, informed of all this, and great was his indignation, great also was the display of it. He insisted that his "book" should be accepted to the very letter. "I told him," wrote Benedict to me, "that I could not admit his right of claiming implicit and slavish submission to every word he had selected from the Scriptures, and am now expecting his further decision." So the contention went on, while, indifferent to its slings and arrows (not aimed at me, by the way), I quietly worked at the new libretto. By the time it was finished, Chorley's letters had ceased, but

he, like Brer Rabbit, was only lying low and biding his time.

"St Peter" was duly performed at Birmingham, and then came the opportunity for which the author of the rejected libretto had waited. He opened fire in the *Athenæum* with reference to what he called "this amazing transaction." He had, of course, a broad and obvious line to work upon, and his articles were not entirely lacking in point and truth. There was, however, much to be said on the other side, the only difficulty being that Benedict could not be made to say it. He often declared his hatred of a paper-war, and this feeling was strengthened by the fact that his opponent was a critic of power and influence. Meanwhile, Benedict remaining silent, Chorley, unchallenged, crowed lustily in the *Athenæum*. At last, Davison and I resolved to do our utmost for Benedict by, in a sense, compelling him to answer his accuser, and, if necessary, even to write his defence ourselves. So, one evening, we dined by arrangement at Benedict's house in Manchester Square, rising from table and getting to business about ten o'clock. We were both quietly amused by our friend's manifest reluctance to enter upon the subject for the discussion of which we had come together. He talked freely on indifferent matters till, our patience exhausted, we took the lead into our own hands with the result that, towards three o'clock in the morning, Davison had made a clean draft of the answer we had agreed

upon, and Benedict, not without urging, had copied and signed it. Even then, the good man was reluctant to let the paper go, suggesting that it might be better to consider the matter a little further. But we were not to be cajoled. The document was placed in an envelope, sealed, addressed to the Editor of the *Athenæum*, and taken possession of by Davison, who suggested that he could post it on his way home. It was easy to see that Benedict felt anything but happy at this moment, and when opening the door for our departure he played a last card.

"Oh! Davison," he said, "I don't like to trouble you to post that letter yourself. Leave it with me and my servant shall post it early in the morning."

"No, you don't," answered Davison, and so the letter went on its way to the *Athenæum* office.

The matter having thus been laid before the public, for and against, there was considerable talk in musical circles. Chorley, though not a man beloved by his fellow-journalists, had, at any rate, one strenuous supporter in the press. Very early in the dispute, that redoubtable Hollander, Charles Lewis Gruneison, ranged up to aid Henry Chorley's craft, thundering loudly with his heavy guns. On the other hand, Davison in the *Musical World*, and myself in various journals, returned shot for shot, not heeding Gruneison, who made a loud noise and did no harm. Poor Benedict, throughout this engagement, was in a

state of great distress. Writing to me in October 1870, he said :—

“You have again given me so many proofs of your kindness, that I make bold asking another and great favour of you, viz. :—not to continue the warfare with Chorley. I am determined *not* to take any notice of his or Mr Grüneison’s attacks against me, and believe no good can arise from this discussion, as it would seem *I* sought the *shelter* of your *pen*. I am sorry to say there is not the *slightest appearance* of my oratorio being produced by the Sacred Harmonic Society, and I fear your severe criticism of Sir M. Costa’s ‘Hymn,’ which I do not know at all, will be made use of as a vehicle by the busybodies who want to injure my prospects, and who, being aware of our collaboration, may incense him against me. Being so much indebted to him for the production of my work at Birmingham, I am naturally anxious to avoid anything which could annoy him, and though I never for a moment would interfere with or influence your opinion, I cannot help lamenting that, judging by appearances, he might fancy that I was intriguing or endeavouring to write him down. Having still to undergo the ordeal of a London performance of ‘St Peter,’ I am most anxious if possible not to increase my enemies, and I am certain that if it is in your power to oblige me you will, with your wonted kindness, grant my request to leave old Chorley, with all his misstatements and even falsehoods, alone.”

So did this man, timid and full of fear, frighten himself by conjuring up ghosts, hobgoblins, and "chimeras dire." He really had no enemies, but he stood in mortal dread of printed paper. Davison often drew an amusing parallel between Benedict and Meyerbeer, asserting that the composer of "Les Huguenots," notwithstanding his brilliant position, would grovel in the dust before a representative of the smallest and most insignificant journal. It need hardly be said that, at Benedict's desire, his defenders sloped arms and made a strategic movement to the rear.

Although "St Peter" was Benedict's last important work he, though well on in years, and overwhelmed with engagements, excess of which he had not the courage to refuse, clung to the idea of further composition. Amongst the rest he busied himself with preparations for an Italian opera. Concerning this he wrote to me in September 1873, as follows :—

"I have concluded an arrangement with Tom Chappell, who will buy the new opera I am about to write, and of which I have sent the argument to an Italian poet, Carlo D'Ormeville, on the suggestion of Rosa, Parepa's husband. I told Chappell, also, that if you will still do me that honour, you shall be my English poet, to which he has fully consented. This shall not interfere at all with the Shepherd Prince, which I trust you will terminate, also, at your leisure."

Here we have Benedict at the age of sixty-nine preparing for a big opera ; but that was not all. He refers, in the letter quoted above, to the "Shepherd Prince." This was an oratorio on the subject of King David, which had been discussed and agreed upon by us. Benedict, however, was keen upon the new opera, and the oratorio had to stand aside. In February 1874 I received another letter on the same subject, in the course of which the writer said :—

"I saw Tom Chappell again to-day on the subject of our opera, and he will be delighted to conclude the necessary arrangements with you when you pass near Bond Street next time. . . .

"I intend, therefore, to devote all my leisure time (after the completion of my 'Orchestral Scherzo') to this work, and shall feel obliged by your returning to me the original MS. Chappell seems to be very well disposed to both of us, and I sincerely hope I may be spared long enough to co-operate with you and write some music of which you should not be ashamed."

There is yet to speak of another oratorio projected by Benedict, and, as to its libretto, undertaken by me. This was on a subject which interested Benedict greatly. He thought he saw in the Temple of Jerusalem the scene of many striking events which might well serve as the basis of a great sacred work. I thoroughly agreed with him on the point, and our hope was, for some time, that we should be able to develop the somewhat

grand ideas we entertained. But "man proposes," etc., and the three great tasks we had set ourselves were never achieved. The burden of his daily avocations was quite as much as Benedict could carry, yet he never formally abandoned the intention, as days and years drifted by, till "too late" might have been inscribed on his unfulfilled purposes.







SULLIVAN IN DIFFICULTIES

## CHAPTER VI

Sullivan and I dine with Patti—The young composer and his police choir—His music to the "Merry Wives"—An interesting letter—A curious slip—Sullivan on Raff's "World's End"—Example of his sensitiveness—The "Martyr of Antioch"—Played through by Eugène d'Albert—The "Golden Legend"—Preparation of the libretto—Correspondence with the composer—A contretemps—Waning of our friendship.

**M**Y acquaintance with Arthur Sullivan began very early in my career as a critic, but the circumstances of our first meeting it is now impossible to recall. We were near neighbours in Lupus Street, Pimlico, and may have encountered each other casually. It is certain, however, that in July 1867 we were on very friendly terms. So much is proved by the following letter, addressed to me by Maurice Strakosch, brother-in-law and agent of Adelina Patti:—

"LONDON, 24 *July* 1867

"MY DEAR MR BENNETT,—You should much oblige Madlle Patti and myself by giving us the pleasure of dining with us Friday next at half-past six. You will meet our common friend, A. S. S.—With my most sincere compliments, I have the honour to be, yours very truly,

"MAURICE STRAKOSCH

*"No evening dress, as we shall be entirely en famille."*

Here follow two postscripts in Sullivan's handwriting :—

“Come here at 5½ sharp, and we will go together. A. S. S.”

“Come in the dress of a penny-a-liner.—A. S. S.”

In 1867, at the date of the above letter, I became a contributor to the *Pall Mall Gazette*; thanks, no doubt, to the good offices of J. W. Davison and Sutherland Edwards. As it was necessary for “copy” to reach that journal by the first post in the morning, I often had to work late, and sally forth to the Lupus Street pillar in the “wee sma’ hours ayont the twal.” Doing this I always passed Sullivan’s house; never omitting to glance up to his study window on the second floor, and, if a light shone there, giving a signal which brought the student down to admit me. The small hours flew rapidly in the little room where Sullivan worked, and in which he sometimes dreamed pleasant dreams, destined to be realised in a measure beyond his wildest hopes. At that time the Power which shapes our ends had drawn him very near the line dividing Society (with the large S) from society (with the small s). It would have been better for music, perhaps, if he had never overstepped that line, but the crossing was almost inevitable. “Society” leading, for the most part, an empty and vapid life, wants to be entertained, and cannot afford to be particular about the entertainers; so it happened that Sullivan, who was

already on the side of the angels as far as that position is assured to a church organist, drifted across to the butterflies, became a friend of Royalty, and a darling of the drawing-rooms. He could hardly help himself, poor boy! Was he not under the control of his own fascinating gifts and sunny temperament?

Referring to Sullivan as an organist, let me go on to say that, at the same time, I also was an organist, and in our common capacity each bore his cross with what manfulness he might. Every Wednesday eve my poor friend did something towards earning his annual stipend of £80 by drilling a posse of policemen in the proper singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. These good fellows formed line along the front of the west gallery—their place on Sundays—lifting up their voices lustily and with good courage. They loved their organist, whose ebullient spirits sometimes led to vocal demonstrations not provided for in the Hymnal. I have seen many a constable burst the bonds of discipline, and many a choir-boy hold himself in till he nearly cracked his cheeks, at the quips and cranks which came from the occupant of the organ-stool. But fancy Arthur Sullivan, who had already written the overture “In Memoriam,” teaching a policeman to deal with accidentals and keep rigidly to the beat! As for my own cross, it is referred to here simply as engendering the fellow-feeling which makes us wondrous kind. This burden took the form of

a popular preacher who objected to the "full" organ lest its spent wind should blow upon him and give him cold; with the reverend gentleman as make-weight being a Scotch deacon who hated instrumental music in the church with all the virulence of a Mucklewrath.

In 1874 Sullivan was commissioned by John Hollingshead to write incidental music to "The Merry Wives of Windsor," in view of a purposed revival of that play at the Gaiety Theatre. The following letter, dated two days before the performance, should be read for its shrewd distinction between real and sham fairies as depicted in music. This has a particular interest; so, for that matter, has the entire epistle.

"8 ALBERT MANSIONS, S.W.,  
17 Dec. 1874

"MY DEAR JO,—I was rather dismayed when I first got the commission to do the 'Merry Wives'—for I could see no opportunity for music. However, in the last Act I have been able to do a little—and it will I hope be bright. I confine my music entirely to that Act and have written (1) a Prelude (Moonlight). (2) Tripping entrance of fairies with Anne Page. (3) Song for Anne Page. (4) Scene for Anne and the children—Solo and chorus, 'Fie on sinful fantasies,' when they pinch Falstaff.

"You will see that I have made the most of the little opportunity there was for music. Of course I shall be pitched into for the Song—but it was

Hollingshead's wish, and he got the words from Swinburne. I was obliged to make it very simple and easy for reasons which you will well understand, and, honestly, I am doubtful whether it is tender and pretty, or whether it is not commonplace. It is on the borderland, and I will frankly accept your verdict about it one way or the other.

"All the music is new, but (and this is not necessarily for publication) if you remember a ballet called 'L'île enchantée' which I wrote for the Italian Opera, Covent Garden, many years ago, you will recognise two themes, the 1st in the Prelude—



and the second in the scene between Anne Page and the children—



I wouldn't write an overture because I didn't care about competing with the very pretty one of Nicolai.

"Your masterly judgment, my dear Joseph, will at once enable you to see that as the fairies are not *real* fairies (if such exist), but only flesh and blood imitations I have endeavoured to indicate this, and have not written music of the same character as I wrote for the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' or that Mendelssohn wrote for the 3rd

Act of the 'Tempest.' I have only had 3 weeks to do the whole thing in, but I don't think you will find it scamped. I enclose you the words of Swinburne's song for Anne Page. Please let me have them back again at once. Kind regards.—  
 Ever your, A. S."

The reader can hardly have failed to notice a curious slip in the last paragraph above, where Sullivan refers to himself as having composed fairy music for "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and attributes to Mendelssohn a like service for "The Tempest." There may be a joke in this, but I have not discovered it.

Another letter, though of much later date than the preceding, may properly be given here. It explains itself.

" DIODATO, CABBE-ROQUEBRUNE, ALPES-MARITIMES,  
 8 March '93

" MY DEAR JO,—A certain column about music which appears every week in the *D.T.* is always interesting, and keeps me *au courant* of what is going on. In return for the pleasure I derive from it, I send the writer the programme of the Concert given here last Sunday. It was intended first to make up the programme of various English composers, selected by my advice, but as the music had not arrived from England when the announcements had to be made, they reversed the dates of the Concerts, and put *my* music on the 5th and the other English composers on the 19th



(next Sunday week). I had two good band rehearsals, and was most enthusiastically welcomed and aided by the band, which as you know is an excellent one (74 good men).

“Steck, the conductor, was also very nice, and did all in his power to help me and make things go well. I received at the end what a French paper calls *une véritable ovation*. At all events, I have done my best to cause us English to be respectably represented at this season's Concerts.

“When I return I will show you the original proposed programme for an English Concert, and I think you will be more than amused. I told poor Steck that such a programme would make him the laughing-stock of Europe! Then he begged me to do it for him.

“You will see I have called my symphony ‘In Ireland.’ I sketched it when I was in Ireland in 1864, and always meant to call it the ‘Irish Symphony,’ but I modestly refrained, as it was courting comparison with the ‘Scotch Symphony.’ But Stanford called his symphony the ‘Irish,’ so I didn't see why I should be done out of my title abroad. The programme for the 19th is as follows :—

<i>Overture</i>	.	.	‘The Troys’	.	HUBERT PARRY.
<i>Benedictus</i>	.	.	.	.	} . MACKENZIE.
<i>Courante</i>	.	.	‘Ravenswood’	.	
<i>Scherzo</i>	.	.	(from ‘Irish’ Symphony)	.	STANFORD.
<i>Finale</i>	.	.	Symphony in G	STERNDALÉ BENNETT.	
<i>Suite</i>	.	.	‘The Language of Flowers’	.	COWEN.
<i>Something</i>	.	.	(not yet settled)	.	SULLIVAN.

“The weather is divine here, but oh, how I long to get back to England. Kindest remembrances at home.—Yrs. ever,

“ARTHUR SULLIVAN”

There can be no dispute now as to the propriety of giving to Sullivan's only symphony the name of “Irish,” but why could we not say so at first? Every man, no doubt, has the right to assert his own modesty, but modesty in this case seems a little overstrained.

Yet another letter may be placed in the same category as the foregoing. On the invitation of the Leeds Festival Committee in 1883, Joachim Raff composed an oratorio entitled “The World's End,” and as the German master did not come to England to conduct it, the duty devolved upon Arthur Sullivan as conductor-general. It will be seen in the following letter that some things in the work were not perfectly clear even to his luminous mind:—

“1 QUEEN'S MANSIONS, VICTORIA ST., S.W.,  
25 *Sept.* 1883

“MY DEAR JOSEPHUS,—Have you studied the score of Raff's work very well? I am a good deal puzzled at the discrepancies between the indicated time marks, and the character of the music. Take the first number, for instance—Adagio  $\frac{1}{2}$ —120. A hundred and twenty—a crochet can hardly be ‘adagio,’ but when you take the metronome and see what a pace it is, it seems incredible that the mark should be correct. To me the metronome

marks seem throughout (except in a few cases) far too fast for the character of the music. What do you think?

“ Raff is a twister, and has cost me many hours’ study. I have discovered a curious mistake in the full score.—Ever yours sincerely,

“ ARTHUR SULLIVAN ”

Every reader of scores must have been faced by the difficulty referred to above. There is nothing more misleading than the often heedless manner in which composers indicate their *tempi*. As to the “curious mistake,” I never heard anything more about it.

Turning to a few letters of another class, it is necessary to state, in the first place, that Sullivan was sometimes much worried with regard to the more distinguished posts connected with his profession. I have preserved the MS. of a letter addressed to the *Musical World* at a time when I was virtually the editor of that journal. The date is Feb. 24, 1875, and as the letter has been lying for thirty years in the coffin of a dead periodical, it may be interesting to give a reprint :—

“ SIR,—In the *Athenæum* of last Saturday there appears the following statement : ‘The death of Sir W. Sterndale Bennett has left two posts of honour, if not of profit, open—namely, the Principal of the Royal Academy of Music, and the Musical Professorship of Cambridge. The Committee of

Management, it seems, has elected Mr G. A. Macfarren, but the validity of the nomination is disputed on the ground that the electoral power rests with the Directors, who wish to appoint Mr Sullivan.'

"Will you allow me through your columns to declare, on the authority of Mr Gill, that there is not a shadow of truth in the above, and that its foundation rests entirely in the imagination of the writer of the paragraph.

"I must also call attention to the obvious purport of his remarks further on, when he gives the names of several of the most distinguished musicians as forming the Committee of Management, and states that the Board of Directors is composed chiefly of aristocratic amateurs.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

"ARTHUR SULLIVAN"

The sensitiveness which caused Sullivan thus to rush into print attended him more or less through his career, and was displayed on various occasions within my knowledge. When, in 1884, Hans Richter became conductor of the Birmingham Festivals, Sullivan felt it very deeply; not, I fully and sincerely believe, on his own account, but because he held that the appointment discredited English art and artists. "If it is true," he said to me, "that Richter has been, or is to be, offered the Birmingham Festival, I think that it is an affront to all of us English." Again, he remarked: "I should certainly have considered it an honour if

they had offered me the festival, whether I could have undertaken it or not. But it is not entirely selfish, for not a thought of envy or regret should I have felt if Cowen, Stanford, Barnby, or Randegger (who is one of us to all practical purposes) had been selected. They would have done the work well."

In 1885 Sullivan was elected President of the Clef Club, Birmingham. He accepted the post, and I suppose I must have expressed some surprise at his having done so after what had occurred. At any rate, I received from him the letter subjoined:—

"1 QUEEN'S MANSIONS, VICTORIA ST., S.W.,  
*June 4, 1885*

"MY DEAR JO,—I accepted the Clef Club presidency—1st, because the offer was evidently made out of kindness, and meant as a compliment, and I do not like to do anything which savours of 'snubbing' such kindly sentiments.

"2nd, because I thought that a refusal might be construed into a display of petty anger and spite against Birmingham folk generally. I hope I am above any feeling of that sort. I have said my say about the festival openly and fearlessly, but there, so far as I am concerned, the matter ends. I am off to California in about a fortnight or three weeks' time. We must arrange one evening for a quiet dinner and chat before I go. You have been catching it hot from some of the American papers. Every man does who ever ventures to say anything

but the most fulsome flattery about that modest nation.—Ever yours, A. S.”

So far as this letter touches the Birmingham affair, it truthfully shows the essential magnanimity of the man. He would do nothing base, however provoked.

In 1888 there was renewed stirring of the Birmingham waters, but this further trouble is a somewhat involved affair, and an explanation would take up more space than the subject is now worth. I may mention, however, that Sullivan was much put out by some remarks made in Birmingham which were unfavourable to the Leeds chorus. A correspondence on this point, *pro* and *con*, sprang up in the Leeds papers also, most of the writers assuming that the chorus was below the proper mark. Of course I had something to say as to the matter in dispute, and received from Sullivan a letter, in which he said :—

“ I have read all the correspondence in the Leeds newspapers about the late festival, and this morning have read your ‘summing up’ of the whole case. I must write you a line to thank you with all my heart for the loyal friendship to me which I can see in every line of it, and also to say how thoroughly I agree with you in all the suggestions you make. Would that we had more critics like you, who know how to combine justice with kindness and consideration ! ”

Referring to the Leeds chorus which he said was "depressed," Sullivan told me: "I have written a letter to cheer them up, and enclose you a copy of it."

In 1873 "The Martyr of Antioch" appeared. To this work one of the composer's letters refers as below :—

"9 ALBERT MANSIONS, S.W.  
(No date)

"MY DEAR BENNETT,—I am only awaiting a *corrected* revise of the 'Martyr' to send it to you. I hope to have it to-morrow. If it does not come, I will send you what I have got. Would you like to have the full score? and would you care to go through it with me? I would come to you if it were possible, but I need scarcely tell you that, what with proofs, orchestral parts, and general preparations for the festival, I haven't a spare moment night or day. If you can afford the time to look me up, name your day and hour. Thursday at 4? I go to Leeds on Friday.—Yours sincerely,  
ARTHUR SULLIVAN

"P.S.—To-morrow (Wednesday) at 4, if you like."

I kept the appointment, and found in Sullivan's room a short, sturdy youth whom my friend had brought from the National Training School for Music to play through the new work. The name of this youth was Eugene d'Albert, who, as everybody knows, has since risen to fame. The

lad played the "Martyr" with such accuracy, facility, and distinction that I became curious about him, and, on the basis of what his chief told me, built great expectations with regard to him. But I did not foresee that he would renounce his country and speak ungraciously of his English teachers.

I now come to a work in which Sullivan and myself were associated. I mean, of course, the "Golden Legend." The first letter received from him relating to this subject has unhappily disappeared from my collection and gone I know not whither. But I recollect that a copy of Longfellow's poems came with it. I think the missing letter stated that Miss Chappell had suggested the subject of the "Golden Legend" to the writer and that they had both endeavoured to select material for a connected work. There was ample proof of much searching in the volume itself, which opened as though instinctively at the poem, and was adorned with many pencil marks on many pages. Sullivan begged me to come to his relief in the making of a "book," saying he felt the task, as far as he was concerned, was hopeless. It appeared to me, on going carefully through the marked passages, that Sullivan had selected incidents and scenes admirably adapted for musical effect, but having, in many cases, no relationship one to another. Of course a libretto could not be constructed in that way, and I determined, without hesitation, to take the story of



Prince Henry and Elsie out of the mass of matter in the poem and deal with it alone. The task was quickly accomplished without consulting Sullivan in any way. I then made a fair copy, took it to the composer, and after one of his "quiet dinners" read it aloud. He listened without saying a word, but when I came to the end he looked up, his eyes beaming and his cheeks flushed, remarking: "You have saved me, Jo!" We did not then discuss the libretto, but passed on to other things; it will presently be seen, however, that practical considerations connected with his own part of our common task suggested a few changes which I shall mention presently.

That is the simple story of the "Golden Legend" up to the point at which Sullivan addressed himself to the music.

Two of my Sullivan letters are mainly concerned with the changes to which I have just referred. From one of these, written at Stagenhoe Park, near Welwyn, and dated August 24, 1886, I extract the following:—

"I have worked on the 4th scene (at Salerno) on the lines you indicated to me. I wrote a Chorus, 'Let him live to corrupt his race,' but I found it so unsatisfactory that I cut it out after it had gone to the printer. I could not get rid of the effects of Spirits in a pantomime. After searching for days I came upon three beautiful lines for the 'attendants' to sing in anticipation of Elsie's

remark—"Weep not, my friends," and it makes a charming, little, unaccompanied bit. I think the scene is bright and bustling. All the rest is as we left it at our last pow-wow, and I have profited by all your suggestions. Shall we call it the 'Golden Legend?' I suppose there is no better title. It has the merit of being known. Will you write a few lines of 'argument' to precede the libretto? I think it would be acceptable."

In the second letter, also written at Stagenhoe Park, Sullivan observed ;—

"Here is a final revise according to the latest touching-up of the score. For its original shape, here are my reasons :—

"*Scene II.* (A) I could not put any chorus into the 'Slowly, slowly,' for the simple reason that it was too late. The parts were engraved. It was the very last thing I wrote of the work.

"(B) I added the third verse of the 'Evening Hymn,' as I was short of words.

"*Scene III.* (A) I have adopted your suggestion and given Lucifer a mocking solo, accompanied, the second time, by the Pilgrims singing their Hymn.

"(B) I had to rewrite 'It is the sea,' because I found that the chorus entirely robbed the next movement of its effect. The chorus I had written was, I really think, a fine piece of descriptive music, but it had to be sacrificed, as the following number is what I rely upon to bring about a broad and impressive effect. So I cut out the chorus and

gave the words as a sort of melancholy reverie to Prince Henry.

"*Scene IV.* I have already explained this to you. There are a few lines cut out in order to bring the action closer and make it more dramatic, and three lines of chorus added.

"*Scenes V. and VI.* are unaltered."

I had no difficulty in recognising that these slight changes were all for the better. Indeed we did the whole of our work together in entire and most pleasant agreement.

In connection with the "Golden Legend," I do not forget my tiny share in its musical construction. One day, when I called upon Sullivan, he showed me the MS. full score of the work, just then completed. It consisted of sheets of score paper, stitched together, with an outside sheet as cover. On turning the first cover I saw the now well-known opening bars of the Introduction, with the dissonant chord for violins at the very beginning. It struck me at once that the opening was not sufficiently effective, and that the leading bars might be played without calling the audience to silence and attention. After a little thought, I said: "I fancy this opening might be improved. Why not begin with the bell-subject as a solo, and thus be sure of gaining the audience at the first moment?" At once Sullivan cried: "By Jove, Jo, you are right! It shall be so." So it was, and is, and on the first cover of the MS. the bell

theme was forthwith written, there being no space for it on the proper first page. This little story shows how ready Sullivan was to grasp an idea without standing upon his dignity with hums-and-haws, as many would have done.

The letters quoted, or entirely transcribed, show their writer, generally speaking, in a serious, business-like mood. I will now make him appear in lighter vein.

During his occupation of Stagenhoe Park, Sullivan frequently pressed me to pay him a visit, he not knowing, good man, how unbreakable are the chains that bind a daily journalist to his desk. In one letter he wrote :—

“A most promising young calf is being fattened, and will be ready for eating next Saturday. So do not fail to come ; you will indeed be welcome. . . . I have asked Lloyd to come also. Try and persuade him that a few days of utter mental stagnation is a good thing for both of you.”

Again he wrote :—

“If you are in town, why not run down here for a breath of air? There are only two or three people with me. We are very quiet. I write all day, and the others lounge about the gardens and park. Say when you will come and I will send to meet you, as I am some distance from the station. Mind I distinctly offer you no amusement, as I haven't got any. But there are lovely walks and drives.”

I did not go then, or at any other time ; though the spirit was most willing, the flesh, being in bondage, was very weak. My friend returned to town at the end of September 1886, and a day or two later I received from him the following characteristic epistle :—

“ You old scoundrel ! Here am I back in town, and you never came to my pretty and quiet place in the country, although I expected you up to the last minute. Flys were in attendance at the station all night for three weeks, and a regular apostolic succession of messengers was established to take care of you when you did come. How about things generally ? The ‘ Mass,’ the ‘ Legend,’ *et hoc genus omne* ? Would you like the full score of ‘ Ye Legende ’ ? and shall you be at home to-night about nine ? and shall I come up (marry) ? and may I smoke if I do ? and will you give me a cooling drink of gin and soda water ?—Yours ever,  
“ A. S.”

Here we have the true Sullivan in dressing-gown and slippers ; bright and genial ; full of fun, and not ashamed to be boyish.

I pass now to an incident which occurred immediately after the production of the “ Legend,” and cast a slight but happily evanescent shadow upon our long friendship. I had usually, during the week of the Leeds Festival, dined or taken supper with Sullivan at his rooms, where he received

much company. But during the week of the "Golden Legend" I did not hear from him. Wondering at this after our association in preparing the new work, I sent him a note inquiring as to any special reason for this departure from usage. The reply was as subjoined.

"1 QUEEN'S MANSIONS, VICTORIA STREET, S.W.,  
21st October 1886

"MY DEAR JO,—I was very glad to get your letter this morning since it explains what was rather a mystery to me. You evidently did not receive the little note I sent you by a cabman on Saturday, after 'St Paul.' I begged you to come to dinner that evening or to supper, or both, saying that our hard work was now over, and that we could meet each other 'without a trace of remorse for the past.' You didn't come to dinner, and I took it for granted that you were still writing; you didn't come to supper, and you never sent a word to say you were pleased with the result of our joint-labours. I confess *I* was hurt. But I suppose the cabman pocketed my half-crown and spent the afternoon in reaping a rich harvest of fares, little knowing the mischief he was doing. I have never yet neglected or slighted an old friend, and certainly I would not begin with you—bless your dear old heart. . . . Ever yours

"ARTHUR SULLIVAN"

To this I replied :—

“ 109 FINCHLEY ROAD, S. HAMPSTEAD, N.W.,  
Oct. 22, '86

“ MY DEAR ARTHUR,—Curses on the cabman! He drove his wretched trap between us, so that we could not see each other, and each thought the other was hiding. I need not say that your note failed to reach me or I should have been there ‘like a bird.’ How well it is to speak under such circumstances, and not mutely nurse a grievance!

“ Although, as matters stood, I said nothing, my thorough sympathies were with your splendid triumph. Have I not often risked offending you by promptings towards some such noble effort and equally noble result? Naturally, then, I was moved in no ordinary degree by what I heard and saw. Than myself you have no more ardent admirer and well-wisher. Now you must go on to higher things, towards which, if my poor efforts can help you, command me.

. . . . .

“ With heartiest congratulations upon your Leeds success both as composer and conductor, I am, dear Arthur, Your faithful friend

“ J. B.”

This ended the trifling misunderstanding due to the cupidity of a cabman.

With the production of the “Golden Legend,”

in 1886, my friendship with Sullivan reached its climax. From that time till his death there was gradual declension. We remained friends, but the warmth of feeling became less and less. I have no very definite idea as to how this movement started. It must have resembled a cataract on a man's eye, of which, at the outset, he is scarcely conscious ; or to put it more poetically, it was like—

“A little rift within the lute,  
Which, ever widening, makes the music mute.”

As far as I was responsible for this state of things, I attributed it in part to disappointment naturally felt at Sullivan's failure to go on to the “higher things” of which I spoke in my letter. I saw him immersed in West-End life, which is never healthy for an artist ; I saw him, as I thought, striving for such poor honours as the Turf can bestow ; in these pursuits wasting time which was precious not only to himself, but to the nation. Moreover, I felt that gifts so exalted as his were not turned to best account in the writing of comic operas, however popular and charming, and all this must have tinged my public remarks upon him with a feeling which a man so sensitive would quickly discern. Thus it came to pass that, without the slightest quarrel, we fell slowly apart. We met for the last time on the railway platform at King's Cross when returning from his last Leeds Festival. He called to me from a little distance, and I went and exchanged a few words with him. I recollect



saying, "Well, Arthur, we never meet now." He replied: "No, we live at the 'antipodes' of each other." By "antipodes" he meant widely separated parts of London, but the word easily lent itself to another and graver application.

## CHAPTER VII

First impressions of G. A. Macfarren—Strange doings at a Cardiff Eisteddfod—Macfarren and his four oratorios—Production of "St John the Baptist" at Bristol.

**B**OTH the "when" and the "where" of my first meeting with George Alexander Macfarren have passed from recollection; probably the date was somewhere in the middle 'sixties, but the first letter in my collection is headed October 27, 1873. Consequently the intercourse between us must have been at that period slight, and this I take to be explained by the fact that the earlier impressions he made upon me were not entirely favourable. He seemed to me hard and harsh; his voice was certainly of that character, and so was his face. But the first feelings with regard to him were not sustained by fuller knowledge. Probably the affliction of his blindness and the terrible handicap which it laid upon him had much to do with the characteristics I have touched upon. In truth, Macfarren's nature was extremely sensitive, and his emotionalism showed itself at times to be in proportion.

As an illustration of Macfarren's quick and sometimes aggressive feelings, I may mention an occurrence which somewhat disturbed the placidity of

the National Eisteddfod holden at Cardiff in 1883. Lord Bute was in the chair, and a choral competition was in full progress, when it occurred to a gentleman in the front row on the platform to get up and move a vote of thanks to the Marquis, giving some worthless reason for his untimely display of oratory. Macfarren and the other adjudicators, of whom I was one, were sitting in a group at the back of the platform. I was, of course, near enough to watch our chief's face. He was unaccustomed to Eisteddfodic vagaries, which are always plentiful and sometimes startling. At first his expression was one of blank surprise, but when he grasped the situation and saw that the competition was likely to be much delayed, indignation flushed his face, and he suddenly, in harsh tones, cried out: "Go on with the Competition. This is most indecent. If you do not proceed with the Competition, the adjudicators will retire in a body." Then again he exclaimed, now literally foaming at the mouth, 'Go on with the Competition!" Some of the huge audience, not having the fear of front-bench magnates before their eyes, began to applaud, and the orator, perhaps prompted by the chairman, sat down; the interruption ceased; the Competition was resumed, and slowly the chief adjudicator's countenance put on its normal appearance. The Celtic audience probably found nothing surprising in Macfarren's outburst of Celtic passion.

I believe, in spite of his apparent hardness, tears

were never very far from his sightless eyes. But to find this out one had to know him, and in the earlier years of our acquaintance my knowledge of the actual man was not sufficiently great. Probably it never would have become great but for the fact that, in 1873, Macfarren stood forward with an important work after an interval of nine years. Not that he was idle during that time. Indeed, the long list of his compositions in all departments of music is proof enough of enormous industry under the most difficult conditions, since he had to dictate every note. The last of Macfarren's seven  
✓ operas was produced in 1864, and his first oratorio saw the light at the Bristol Festival in October 1873. This was the beginning of a period distinguished by almost youthful energy and enthusiasm, during which he composed four full-sized oratorios—"St John the Baptist," "The Resurrection," "Joseph," and "King David." To the labour of writing the three works last named, Macfarren was doubtless impelled by the success of "St John the Baptist," which drew a chorus of praise from all quarters, and, though now never performed, deserves everything said in its favour. This early success in the department of oratorio excited very great interest in myself, and we were brought closer together in consequence. The first letter I possess from him touches the subject of the Bristol oratorio, as, for example, in the subjoined extract :—

“Thanks for your article, of which—quite apart from its opinions—I am proud to be the hero, for it is indeed a beautiful piece of writing. So, as I said before, and, as I shall always feel, I thank you.”

In another letter, written a few days later, he again refers to his successful work, and speaks of having sent for my judgment a document concerning “St John,” which he was content to publish or suppress as I advised. What was the matter of the document is not now in my memory, and I mention it only to show that with the appearance of Macfarren as an oratorio composer our acquaintanceship ripened to confidence and friendship. As the three other oratorios came out in succession, I occasionally received a letter from him. The superscription of that which I now proceed to quote does not indicate the year in which it was written, a blank of that kind being often a feature in the composer’s correspondence, but internal evidence goes to show that the letter reached me shortly after the production of “Joseph” at Leeds in 1877. At the close of the performance of that work, Davison and I went to the post-office and sent a cheery message to Macfarren, congratulating him upon his success. He replied as under:—

*“October 15—2.30*

“MY DEAR FRIEND—So you indeed prove yourself by your magnetic expression of sympathy. I thank you heartily for the message, and consider you, if not as the author of the success you record,

certainly its editor. After all, I begin to think, which I never did till now, that one is better off to be out of the excitement and anxiety of a performance when one has such a well-wisher as you on the spot, than to witness such a miscarriage as fell to my lot where last you and I met. With warmest thanks—Yours,  
G. A. MACFARREN "

In explanation of this letter it should be stated that Macfarren did not attend the first performance of his work but remained quietly in London—a very rare instance of self-restraint in a composer.

Several episodes of Macfarren's later career are illustrated by his correspondence with me. After the Eisteddfod at Cardiff, I went on to Harlech, where another and much smaller gathering of the bards was being held in the ruins of the Castle. Almost as a matter of course, I drove from Dolgelly to the scene of operations, and probably made some mention of what I saw in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph*. A propos to this Macfarren wrote :—

“ I learn with some admiration of your sequel to the Cardiff tumult, in what you witnessed at Harlech. Evidently the men of the place must have great charm for you since you must visit them in their home after hearing them be-sung and be-played so often as you did during our four days' adjudgment.”

But Macfarren knew little of the Welsh and I knew much. There is always a kind of sporting

interest in an Eisteddfod-meeting. One never knows what may happen, nor whether, as at Cardiff, there will be an astounding surprise.

Macfarren was appointed Professor of Music in Cambridge University in 1876, there following his old friend, Sterndale Bennett. I thought the subject good enough for a leader in the *Daily Telegraph*, and one duly appeared. Macfarren replied thus :—

“7 HAMILTON TERRACE, N.W.

*January 30, '76*

“MY DEAR BENNETT,—Countless thanks for you superb ‘leader.’ Folks would certainly give me the credit of inditing it if they could believe that I had the wit. If you want report of Cambridge Lectures you must please to let me know immediately. . . .

“Have you heard of the professors’ scholarships established by subscription of R. A. M. professors, with some contributions from their friends, for orchestral pupils? Is this better than sending noblemen round the country to break the mendicity laws in favour of an uninstituted institution?—Yours with kind regards, G. A. MACFARREN ”

The hit at certain measures taken to found a musical college farther west than Tenterden Street is by no means obscure.

In 1877, Macfarren was not only represented at Leeds by a new oratorio, “Joseph,” but also at the Glasgow Festival of that year by a new cantata,

"The Lady of the Lake." We both travelled down to the big Scottish city and were both guests at the house of Thomas Stillie, who, though an amateur, acted as musical critic of the *Glasgow Herald*. Macfarren, not long before, had received from his University the honorary degree of "Doctor in Music," and in conversation one day over the dinner-table, I, by way of varying procedure, several times called him "Doctor." Presently he blazed up, and exclaimed with some heat: "Don't call me Doctor! I make Doctors!" I bowed submissively. One had to speak by the card with G. A. M.

Following our return to London, I received the subjoined characteristic letter:—

"7 HAMILTON TERRACE, N.W.,  
20 November 1877

"MY DEAR BENNETT,—The company motive permeated all my movements in Glasgow. The graceful cab passage introduced me to the train, where the travelling motive was an under-current to all other ideas. Paramount above this was the analysis motive, which now is set forth in fullest force, and gradually subsided into the thankful motive which prompts acknowledgment of the penetration, the happy power of expression, and the friendly feeling of which your book<sup>1</sup> on my book is the evidence. I wish the hearing of the 'Cantata' may not have foiled the belief the

<sup>1</sup> My "book" was an analysis of the cantata, prepared by request of the Festival Committee.



reading induced in you. The words and music should be regarded as an illustration of the poem rather than as a setting. When Turner illustrated 'Paradise Lost,' he made not a picture on every line nor on each incident, but represented only those points which were most eligible. When Shakespeare wrote 'Julius Cæsar,' he showed not every event of the hero's career; when Scott wrote his own poem, he explained not when Malcolm was imprisoned or for what cause, and surely a like completeness in incompleteness is permissible to the lyric artist.—Yours, with many thanks,

“G. A. MACFARREN”

After his elevation to the Principalship of the Royal Academy of Music, Macfarren became the vigilant watch-dog of that institution. Nothing that threatened it, or seemed to threaten, escaped his notice, and he was ever ready to sound an alarm. In 1881 I wrote an article in, I think, the *Daily Telegraph*, on the action of the City authorities in establishing that which we now know as the Guildhall School of Music. I welcomed this movement, and wrote in support of it with some heartiness, but not in such a way as entirely to please the Principal in Tenterden Street. Hence the following letter:—

“ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC,  
30th October 1881

“MY DEAR BENNETT,—I have heard your article on the 'City and Music' with much edification and

entire faith, but while you give such just praise to the liberality of those worthies who are out of their depth in money, and only saved from drowning by the wholesome fear of being called to give an account of their swimming, it is curious that you give reports of our concerts and never profit by the opportunity to stimulate contribution to our Reserve Fund, which is the result of personal generosity, which has the same object as the endowment you righteously applaud, but which, thus far, languishes from the want of general knowledge that it is instituted.

“I enclose particulars, and leave it to your wisdom to refer to them or not; to give publicity to the matter, or let it rest asleep, and in fact to do wholly as you like; knowing, as I do, that you can see what may be for the best. Observe especially that I do not ask for anything, but tell you only of what I know must have escaped your notice.—Yours, with kind regards,

“G. A. MACFARREN ”

Thus alert in a comparatively small matter, it was not surprising that the proposed foundation of a “National School of Music” at Kensington Gore exercised him greatly. For my own part, I held that the royal and distinguished persons who promoted the institution just named would have done better to have built upon a foundation already laid—to have modified, if necessary, the Charter of the R. A. M., built a house for the school, enlarged its

operations, and endowed it with new life. It was perhaps extremely simple of me to treat such imaginings as possible of realisation, but it was, at any rate, a straightforward conception, and not altogether wanting in common sense. Under the signature "An Amateur," I argued on this line in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph*, discussing it in two or three articles. These letters drew a reply from Macfarren, who perfectly well knew that the "Amateur" was myself. Here is his letter :—

"7 HAMILTON TERRACE, N.W.,  
17th January

"MY DEAR JOSEPH BENNETT,—I thank you for the insertion of the 'Amateur's' letters in the *D.T.* I thank you less for the sake of the Academy, whose aim the letters support, than for the sake of music, whose interest should stand above every other consideration.

"I should like you to draw the writer's notice to a misconception in the last letter, because it involves the principle which lies at the root of the whole affair—namely, that the R.A.M. does not care to occupy a large sphere. Its constant care is not 'to increase its store,' but to apply all it can gather of influence or income to the expansion of its usefulness ; for instance, first, the sevenfold multiplication of its average number of pupils ; second, an enlargement of its range of instruction by the establishment of operatic study, occasional lectures, classes for languages, periodic meetings

for non-public performances ; third, the institution of local exams. of musical students all over the country ; fourth, that of the metropolitan exams. of musical professors, etc.

“ Its Charter is elastic, and admits of boundless expansion in its activity. The writer then is scarcely aware of the constant effort to apply this power when he speaks of supineness and standing on the defensive. I have a volume more to say, but will save it rather till I learn you want to hear it, and would then much rather speak than write. Meanwhile I stick to my thanks, and am yours, with further particulars in store,

“ G. A. MACFARREN ”

The matter, having gone so far, went farther. “ An Amateur’s ” articles attracted attention amongst the promoters of the new enterprise, between whom and the authorities of the *Daily Telegraph* communications seemed to have passed. At any rate, I was invited to go to Marlborough House and discuss the subject with the distinguished persons who had the matter in hand. I accepted, went to Marlborough House, in company with Sir Edwin Arnold, and in the course of an interview with the distinguished persons, explained my views (which, of course, were those of “ An Amateur ”) and listened to an exposition of theirs. It was all wasted time. An agreement was out of the question, and I came away as I went. From Marlborough House I walked to

the Royal Academy of Music and saw Macfarren, who knew nothing of the meeting just held, nor of any intention to hold it. I recounted what had taken place, he all the time listening grimly. As I ceased to speak, he uplifted his voice in those harsh accents which distinguished him when moved, and said in effect (I have no note of his actual words) :—

“The Royal Academy does not want to amalgamate with anybody or anything. It is self-sufficient, and will go on with its work without particularly regarding what others may choose to do.” This struck me as a case of flouting one’s friends, and thereupon I took my leave, pondering the question whether it would not be wise if I strictly confined myself to recording concerts.

I have already referred to the emotionalism which lay underneath the seemingly hard and rugged exterior of Macfarren. On this matter I hope to be forgiven for going beyond the limits of my own memory—at any rate, of my own first-hand memory. Davison, who had a habit of repeating his stories, often told me of an incident connected with the days of his youthful fads. It appears that the Shelley fever raged violently amongst the intellectual young fellows of that time, and a coterie of Shelley worshippers was formed by Davison, Macfarren, John Simon (afterwards Sir John Simon), and others whose names I have had no particular occasion to remember. These ardent youths were in the habit

of meeting to discuss the subjects dear to their hearts, developing their symposia into perfect orgies of oratory. Amongst other resolutions arrived at was the repudiation of animal food—a step which sometimes placed them in a difficult position. For instance, someone sent to Macfarren a fine salmon, and the question arose in the recipient's mind as to what should be done with it. He was at that time a bachelor or, probably, Mrs Macfarren would have decided the point for him with extreme promptitude. Macfarren could not eat the salmon himself, and he did not like to throw it away, wherefore the good man went about from friend to friend carrying the scaly beauty in a basket and asking, "Who will have a fish?" His friends were few, and mostly Shelleyites, but he was finally relieved of his burden, and went home congratulating himself upon a triumph of principle.

Davison would at times tell me a tale of Macfarren's love. It is somewhat hard to connect G. A. M. with the master passion, but it appears that he was smitten by the charms of a Miss Bendixon, and as a man so suffering must have a confidant, he poured into Davison's ear the story of his love. He had not spoken to the lady, but was working up to that point, and needed the encouragement of a friend. Davison was quite prepared to sympathise, he himself being in a like position, and enamoured of Charlotte Dolby (afterwards Madame Sainton-Dolby). There was nothing surprising in

this. Charlotte was a very beautiful girl ; as to Miss Bendixon's charms I have no particulars, but they were sufficient to subdue Macfarren. These love-lorn young men were in the habit of walking up and down in front of the dwelling of their respective damsels, Davison accompanying Macfarren to the abode of Miss Bendixon, and Macfarren being "best man" when Davison would parade before the fortunate dwelling of Miss Dolby. These thrice-blessed houses they would pass and repass till they were tired. There must have been some pleasure in the operation, but, in neither case, did it bring the aspirant nearer to the storming of the fortress he wished to capture.

One day it came to Davison's knowledge that Miss Dolby was staying as a guest at a river-side mansion somewhere up the Thames. This was tempting, and Miss Dolby's lover, supported by the faithful Macfarren, went up-stream on the chance of seeing her. Having identified a house standing in large grounds, the adventurers climbed the boundary wall and dropped down amongst some bushes, whence they worked round till the front of the mansion, and the lawn before it, stood revealed. Soon Miss Dolby appeared at a window looking on the lawn and remained there some time, while Davison, concealed among the laurels, glutted his eyes with the sight of her, and Macfarren, having no personal concern in the matter, read a book. They were presently espied by a servant, a gardener, perhaps, who very properly demanded

what they were doing there. A reason had to be improvised, and the gardener, not satisfied with it, told them they had better depart at once lest a worse thing should befall. They took the advice, reclinced the wall and regained the road. So the adventure came to an end.

Davison afterwards composed a descriptive "Fantasia" for the pianoforte, representing the whole story. He gave me a copy, with annotations in his own handwriting, such as "Here Charlotte appeared," and "Here the keeper came." The copy is unfortunately lost, but what a pity that those were not the days of kodaks and that no snapshot preserves to us the spectacle of the future critic of the *Times* and the future Cambridge Professor of Music, tumbling over a wall with the objurgations of the gardener ringing in their ears! Ah, well! What says John Oldmixon?—

"Lovers may of course complain  
Of their trouble and their pain,  
But, if pain and trouble cease,  
Love without it will not please."

How devoted Macfarren was to the harmonic theory of Day appears very clearly in the letter below. He had edited a new edition of Day's book, and, like every author and editor, desired notices in the Press:—

"MY DEAR JOSEPH BENNETT,—I shall be particularly glad if you will review the new edition of Day's 'Harmony,' of which a copy will be sent you with this. I ask the favour not for my own sake,



for I have had my profit in the improvement gained in preparing the book; not for the sake of my former friend, the author, for he is no longer here to enjoy the glory you might give him; not for the sake of the publishers, for they, I trust, will profit by the sale of the book, but for the sake of music, which, I am sure, will be benefited by the propagation of principles therein originated, which at most I have more fully explained than was at first done by the writer when the treatise was issued. Whatever insight I have into the theory of harmony, I owe entirely to the light cast upon it in the work I mention, the tenets of which I have always taught since I had the advantage to know and believe in them.—Yours, with kind regards,

“G. A. MACFARREN”

I met Michael William Balfe only once, and then exchanged with him no more than the words which conventionally attend the ceremony of introduction. His period of greatest activity preceded my appearance among the critics, and afterwards, I believe, he was not often in London. In the absence of personal recollection, I am glad to reproduce a characteristic letter addressed by the composer to William Duncan Davison, brother of the critic, and by him presented to me :—

“154 AVENUE DES CHAMPS ELYSÉES,  
23 *Feb.* 1870

“MY DEAR BILL,—In consequence, and in consideration, of the genuine success of ‘La Bohé-

mienne,' the Emperor has been pleased to confer upon me the decoration of the Légion d'Honneur. I want you, like a good fellow, to announce this to my friends in England in your prettyist (*sic*) style.

"I have knocked at Death's door, and the fellow would not let me in this time, for which I feel very grateful. You know, I suppose, that I have been for four months confined to the house with an attack of bronchitis which would have killed many a finer fellow than M. W. B. Heureusement, ni la mort, ni le Diable, would have anything to do with me. I hope soon to get back to London. I am longing for the English air and British roast beef. My wife sends love. Tell this to Jim—I mean about the Légion d'Honneur—but he cares no more for his old chum.—Yours for ever and a day,

" M. W. BALFE

"*P.S.*—The old 'Bohemian Girl' has saved the Théâtre Lyrique from shutting its doors, and really the French public love Balfe's music. This is a fact!! Undeniable."

## CHAPTER VIII

My first approach to George Grove, editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*—He suggests a subject—I become one of his contributors—A glimpse of Davison's "Muttonians"—Grove and Schumann's music—Differences of opinion thereupon—Grove cannot understand them—I become a Schumann convert—My article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*—Grove's delight—Various letters from him and extracts on divers subjects—His death—August Manns—His extreme sensitiveness to criticism—Grove intercedes with the Press—Stimulating effects of critical approbation—Sufferings of a rheumatic conductor.

I HAVE preserved many of Grove's letters to me, but their usefulness for my present purpose is sadly lessened by the fact that they give no certain clue to the year in which they were written. The difficulty thus created has to be surmounted, if at all, by whatever internal evidence the writing affords. The earliest of these epistles is an exception to the rule, and bears date March 11, '68. At that time our relations had not advanced from acquaintanceship to friendship, this being apparent from the formal address, "My dear Sir." Grove was then the editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*, and I had written to him suggesting an article on the subject of "Cathedral Choirs." His reply is of sufficient interest for partial quotation :—

"The subject of 'Cathedral Choirs' is not at all a bad one, and there is no doubt that you would

treat it well. I cannot, of course, undertake to accept your paper for the Magazine till I actually have the MS. in my hands; but I don't imagine that there will be much difficulty about that. It should not be longer than ten pages. The more lively you can make it, the better; always, of course, keeping strictly clear of personalities. There must be some delicious stories to be told about those curious old establishments, which, though current enough in choirs and cloisters, have not yet emerged into the outer air."

I cannot be certain that the proposed article was ever written, though I contributed several to the magazine; but certainly the field is now open to any maker of books with a genius for picking up stories. "Tales of Choirs and Cloisters" would be a rather attractive title for a gadding public.

Another letter, written in the 'sixties, is curious for its liberal use of certain nicknames by which J. W. Davison's imaginary company of "Muttonians" was known. Grove invites me to dinner, and informs me that my fellow-guests will be Dishley Peters, Thaddeus Egg, Flamborough Head, Dr Shoe, and Dr Silent. He promises also that I shall meet the "Prodigal Son," by whom, of course, Sullivan is meant. Of the "Muttonian" names, Peters, Shoe, and Silent were those of Davison himself, and used by him in various "Muttonian" capacities. Flamborough Head was Grove, and assuredly Thaddeus Egg was the name

borne by me in that singular companionship. Thus there were six names, and only four diners—quite a small vagary in those jocular days. But I shall have more to say about the “Muttonians” in later pages.

Grove's whole-hearted admiration of Schumann's music at a time when the composer had yet to win favour in England is a fact still remembered to his credit. The Zwickau master's works appealed to him; he saw beauty in them, and it was not his way to shrink from an honest expression of his opinions. He was, however, a warm partisan, of abnormal sensitiveness, unable, sometimes, to understand why people should differ from him, and inclined to exaggerate what he regarded as offensive in their remarks. I have a letter bearing upon this matter. It is undated, like most others received from him, but was certainly written sometime in 1868:—

“CARO BENEDETTO,

. . . . .

“I can't see why it is that D. and you and I look with such different eyes. That concerto (pianoforte, Schumann) seems to me as interesting and as beautiful a piece of music as I know. To say that it is as noble and lofty & consistent and as great a work of art as Beethoven's E flat or G major is just ridiculous, but surely that fact should not make one deny its real merits. That is what some of our critics seem to me to do; they either

praise entirely or blame entirely, and then I can't go with them. Another thing—I can't go with you in your language about Mrs Schumann. I don't think I could use the terms you & others have used about her to *any* woman, even if she were a personal enemy. However, these are matters of taste, and we won't quarrel over them, only I know that this violent and, as I think, unfair mode of proceeding has had upon me and others the very contrary effect intended.

“ Yours ever,

G. GROVE ”

This was a severe rebuke, or would have been severe had it come from a man less impulsive and not so heated in feeling. It is not, and never has been, my practice to make use of opprobrious terms, or indulge in personalities, and I cannot believe that I did so in the case of Mrs Schumann, before whom, however, I saw no reason to bend at the angle of inclination customary in the case of “G.” I am not aware that my friend praised me for writing in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of March 6, 1868, the words that follow :—

“ Whatever could be done for it (the pianoforte Concerto) by an executant was done by Mme. Schumann, who always plays her husband's music to perfection. Rarely has she exerted herself more earnestly, or shown more of her great ability.” I doubt if this language rose to the height of tem-

perature desired by the warm-hearted Secretary of the Crystal Palace.

Eight months later Grove drank the wine of delight. In the *Pall Mall Gazette* of November 30, 1868, appeared an article headed "Robert Schumann." It was largely an appreciation of the composer, and the first of its kind to challenge attention in an English journal of acknowledged influence. The writer was myself! Not being young enough at the outset of my career as critic to have very decided opinions, I looked to Davison as my master and teacher. He easily influenced me against Schumann's music up to the point at which a man, unable to trust his own judgment, accepts the opinion of others, being all the while ashamed of himself for so doing. At that point, however, I did not long remain. Schumann's music began to grow upon me, and continued growing. I soon recognised its beauty and felt its charm, till at length conscience dictated the "open confession" which a proverb says is "good for the soul." That this would grieve Davison and expose me to the reproach of my whilom comrades, the anti-Schumannites, was certain, but I could do no other and keep intact my self-respect. Under these circumstances the paper above referred to was written and published.

The article made a certain effect. Davison was hurt at what he looked upon as my defection from a cause to which he had committed himself. Grove, on his part, was at first uncertain as to the author-

ship, but soon became convinced that it must be from my pen, and not many days later he came to me in St James's Hall, his face aglow with excitement, and his tongue pouring forth a stream of thanks and congratulations. I clearly remember only one sentence: "My dear fellow, your article makes an epoch in English musical criticism." I considered the remark to be, as Mark Twain said about the report of his death, "much exaggerated"; but I may claim to have helped the movement which eventually placed the English reputation of Schumann where it now stands.

Several letters of Grove to me make, as may be supposed, interesting references to his work on the Crystal Palace musical programmes. In the communication from which I quoted the "severe rebuke" administered to myself and others, the following paragraph occurs:—

"Did I tell you I was going to collect my notices of B.'s 9 symphonies, and add to them, & make a 'Handbook'? You must be merciful when it appears."

A long time elapsed, however, before the volume, now a text-book, was sent to press. Truly it was worth waiting for.

Following the first performance at the Crystal Palace of Spohr's "Historical" Symphony, I noticed the work in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and thereanent received the following from Grove:—



“CRYSTAL PALACE, *Feb.* 15

“MY DEAR BENNETT,—I can't refrain from a line to thank you for your article in the *P.M.G.* of to-day. O si sic omnia—not of yours, but of other men's. All your articles are instructive and judicious, but this more so than usual. I quite accept all your rebukes, especially that about ‘Idomeneo,’ which I should have commented on if I had not been on my back with rheumatism most of the week; which must plead my excuse also for the amount of repetition there is in my notes on the ‘Historical.’

“I don't see the want of unity in the Symphony, except as any work written in 4 different styles must necessarily lack it. Indeed, the unity derived from the constant presence of Spohr is almost too much. Nor do I quite agree with you as to the Pastorale, which I thought fairly good as an imitation, as well as very pretty. The last 4 bars of it are very modern certainly, but hardly so the rest. I am very glad we gave the Symphony.—  
Yours ever, G. GROVE”

Another letter, similar in kind, will not I hope break down the reader's patience. I had made some remarks on “Programmes,” which moved Grove to write me thus:—

“CRYSTAL PALACE

“MY DEAR B.,—I have just been reading carefully your notice on Programmes, which was snatched from me by an anxious friend before I

could more than glance at it. Many thanks for the kindness of your remarks. I shall ponder the conclusion & do my best to profit by it; but indeed, with me, 'to convey historical facts & help towards an intelligent comprehension of the music' is the main aim. I assure you, I work at these programmes with dates & catalogues and biographies, as hard as if I were making an inventory, but such is the blessed power of music that the sweetness & the poetry will come in and clothe the dry bones and gild the bare frames. I have an aversion to all ornamentation which is not hung on a sufficient scaffold of facts.

"Again, many thanks, and believe me ever  
yours,  
G. GROVE"

During Grove's term of office at the Royal College of Music his opportunities for casual correspondence with musical friends appear to have lessened. Some letters of the period are in my collection, but only one is now of sufficient interest to claim a place here.

In the *Musical Times* of January 1897 appeared an article from my pen drawing attention to the contrast between Schubert's weak expression in words and his strong utterances in music. This, of course, was not announced as a discovery, since the inequality is well known as appertaining to other composers, but it served as a peg on which to hang some remarks I had long desired to make. Now, Grove loved Schubert with almost feminine

devotion. The very name "had music in't," and he responded to the sound as promptly as an Æolian harp to the breath of a zephyr. Wherefore it was not surprising that on the very date of the number containing my article I received from him the following letter:—

"LOWER SYDENHAM, Jan. 1, 1897

"DEAR BENNETT,—I must say a word or two to you on your interesting paper on Schubert, on p. 12 of the *Musical Times*. It is certainly a most extraordinary thing that Schubert's expressions in words and music should have been so different, though I am not sure that you do not a little under-rate his powers in the former, but cannot the same thing be said of other great musicians? What more different and curious than the impulsive, unreasonable ejaculations of Beethoven from the extraordinarily dignified, reasonable & enduring nature of his compositions, and, as far as one remembers, the great numbers of things that Mozart said were of the most childish description. It is a very great subject, and I cannot but hope that you will pursue it further. . . .—Yours very sincerely,

"G. GROVE"

At the date of the foregoing letter Grove had entered upon his last years, and the time of his rest was approaching. Even then the hand which wrote was not his own. But he was as keen as ever in defence of his favourites, and here we see him urging extenuating circumstances, although nothing

I had said implied a reproach. In this, as in kindred cases, appeared the femininity of his nature. Happily that trait was incomplete. He could love without measure, but, as far as I ever saw, he could not hate in the same, or, indeed, in any degree.

I cannot bring to an end this chapter on "G." without making some extracts of interest from other letters to me.

He refers to his analyses for the Crystal Palace concerts :—

"I am quite ashamed of the old ruts in which I have gone on writing about great works for so long. I never reprint my analyses exactly—always make some material alterations or additions, but, still, it is all of a piece (often ripe & rotten from much handling), & therefore I was unfeignedly glad when I heard that you were going to bring a new head & new ideas to the work. Please, now and always, to believe in my entire sincerity."

He looks apprehensively on the future of music.

"But, my dear fellow, when Halle and Joachim, & one or two more, are gone, who will take their place? The succession will be cut & can never be renewed properly. I have been thinking about this lately with sorrow. As to Beethoven, if the new school goes on demanding more and more noise and strenuousness, who, in 20 years' time, will find it worth while to lower his force down to that wanted by Beethoven (even if he should wish

to do so)? I declare to you the thought makes me quite hot."

He writes concerning Beethoven's use of the "pedal point":—

"I have only very lately realised what a part the pedal plays in the various movements of No. 7. The pedals throughout form a really distinguishing feature of the work. How inexhaustible these great works of Beethoven are! I am often quite lost in admiration of them."

He pencils a note on March 2, 1891, containing another word of commendation for myself. I quote it with the frankest pride:—

"I have just read your 'Jubal' for the first time, & I must congratulate you. How happy you must be to have such a store of happy images & sweet thoughts welling up in your mind. I can repeat plenty of psalms and poetry, but to have them come fresh into one's mind must be good indeed."

He points out a coincidence:—

"It may be useful for you to see (though probably you know it) that one of the subjects in Benedict's 'Tempest' overture is, almost note for note, from the Trio of Spohr's 'Power of Sound'; that again having probably been suggested by a phrase in Mozart's Quartet in C."

He writes concerning a forthcoming book:—

"I am finishing my book on Beethoven's Symphonies for Christmas. It is not at all a reprint of the C.P. books. I have put all my heart and self into it, & good or bad, it will, at least, contain that. How I long for old Jimmy Davison to read it, dear old cove! I hope he has got a good box up there, & is able to lie in bed till 12 o'clock. That will be Heaven to him, with tobacco & other delights."

He thanks me for a notice of the book :—

"I am too tired for a long note, but I must say a few words to thank you for your remarks in the *Telegraph*, as admirably put as they are warmly conceived. Thank you, my dear old friend, for this one more sign of your good will."

Grove had an ever ready laugh for his friends; sometimes with them, occasionally at them. One day, when Robert Bowley was manager at the Crystal Palace and Grove was secretary, I entered G.'s room and found him in convulsions of mirth. Presently, when he could command speech, my friend exclaimed: "Oh! that Bowley; he will be the death of me. I said to him just now: 'You seem to be full of business to-day.' 'Full!' he replied, 'I am quite a *multum in parvo*.'" Bowley, at that time, was an enormous man weighing, I should say, far on towards thirty stone, and, not long after, he literally sank under "the burden of the flesh."

The merits of Manns as conductor and musician have been discussed not only at large, but also with rare oneness of feeling and unanimity of opinion. In this his memory will evermore be happy, and, on the strength of unqualified acclaim, his adopted land will, let us all hope, preserve to him "a broad approach of fame." For my own part, I desire here to touch upon some personal qualities, less obvious to the public eye than his musical gifts and achievements, but, nevertheless, important in their influence upon both the man and the artist. It was impossible to watch Manns in the act of conducting without being assured that he was supersensitive, and, in popular language, "a bundle of nerves." Inordinately endowed with this quality, so necessary to a musician, and so often a heavy cross to be borne, it is not surprising that Manns deeply felt adverse criticism, even when it was purely the honest and moderate expression of an opinion. So, too, when, as it seemed to him, he received less than his rightful meed of approval. I am able to illustrate the last point by a letter which came to me, in 1876, from George Grove. The circumstances do not call for preliminary remarks.

"I want to ask a kindness from you. Manns is in a terrible state of grief owing to various remarks in the papers recently which seem to give me more credit than is due—or rather to give him less—in reference to the Saturday Con-

certs. He urges that I am spoken of as if the choice of the programmes, and the excellence of the execution, and the entire success of the concerts were due to me. I can't see the inference, but he does, and is terribly hurt and distressed. He is over-sensitive, but, on the other hand, he is so able and devoted, and has done so much more for music than any conductor that I have ever had to do with in England, that I should be very glad if he could be relieved in some way. He urges me to write to the papers, but this I am determined not to do. But it occurs to me that you could easily say something in your next notice that would heal the wound, and I am sure you will be glad to do so, both for my sake and his. I have written in the same sense to Ryan and J. W. D."

It need not be said that an unfair division of praise, as between the two eminent workers for music on Sydenham Hill, was by no means the intention of the critics who had so distressed the conductor. In so far as it really existed, the cause of trouble may have been found in the prominence of Grove as the literary mouthpiece of the concerts. He was the outside man of the show, his colleague being the performer inside.

A letter addressed to me by the late conductor, in 1893, shows him as sensitive to the bestowal as to the undue withholding of praise. After speaking of himself as immersed in preparations for a Handel Festival, he goes on to say :—



“I cannot refrain from telling you that the very kind comments on my conductor-doings in England contained in the *Daily Telegraph* of yesterday have given me new blood for new exertions on behalf of good productions of good music. I have been perfectly hungering for lines of this kind from you, and therefore cannot refrain from telling you, in my own undisguised way, that you have made me happy, and that I thank you heartily and sincerely for the valuable support you have thus given me in my art-pursuits.”

The expressions I have quoted from each letter may be taken by some as indications not alone of sensitiveness, but also of weakness. Be that as it may, they are more natural than assertions of indifference to journalistic censure or approval, which, often made, are never credited.

Manns was very proud of the comprehensive repertory which his eclectic spirit made the chief boast of Crystal Palace music. For it he showed himself quick to claim credit, as in a letter (June 1893), from which I make the subjoined extract :—

“The musical critics seem to have been under the impression that the above-named Symphonic Poem (Smetana’s ‘*Ultava*’) had never been heard in England before last Monday, when it was included in the programme of the Richter Concert. Kindly examine the two programmes of our Crystal Palace Saturday Concerts of 1881 and 1882, and

you will find that I introduced 'Ultava' and 'Vigsebrad' as long as twelve years ago. I was much discouraged by the musical criticisms which followed my efforts (and my musical self) to bring these works of, at that time, a perfectly unknown Bohemian composer before my Crystal Palace audience, and I must add here that I did not fare much better in Glasgow, where, in 1882, I gave 'Die Moldau' (Ultava)."

Bravery at the conductor's post does not essentially differ from bravery at the cannon's mouth, and I am about to show, by means of a most interesting letter, how a "mere musician" may endure suffering as a hero, in the pursuit of his gentle art. The letter was addressed to me by Manns a few days after the Handel Festival of 1894 :—

"As a subscriber to, and constant reader of, the *Daily Telegraph*, I, of course, saw your censure on the shortcomings of the reproduction of two of the choruses in the second part of 'Israel in Egypt.' Please do not be angry with my endeavour to acquaint you with the chief cause of those shortcomings. I have struggled since last December to combat and cure rheumatism in both shoulders, and although I had succeeded so far that I could get through my conductor's labours in Glasgow, and afterwards here at my orchestral concerts, my enemy would not leave me. I had to go through the six preliminary piano (chorus)

rehearsals as best I could, and the result was this—when in the midst of the chorus ‘Wretched Lovers,’ last Wednesday, my right shoulder cracked as if its bones were crushed. The thereto smouldering pain became all of a sudden very acute. I tried my best with nursing during Wednesday night and Thursday, but had to approach my work on Friday with a foreboding of trouble. The trouble came. I could not lift my conducting arm sufficiently high, nor could I give the beat that accentuated swing without which the 3600 performers cannot be kept together. The beat, at the beginning of the two choruses in question, having to be done with the fore-arm, was not distinct enough for the far-off choristers; hence the failure.”

Well, all that is over now, and the “good, grey head which all men knew,” has bowed itself even to the dust.

I cannot resist the temptation to add, by way of postscript to my remarks upon the Crystal Palace conductor, a letter addressed by Manns to Sir Alexander Mackenzie in explanation of his absence from the public banquet given to me on November 6, 1906. Modesty cries “Withhold it,” but Pride, like some of John Bunyan’s friends on a certain occasion, exclaims “Print it.” The stronger feeling prevails, and here it is :—

“UPPER NORWOOD,  
November 4, 1906

“MY DEAR MACKENZIE,—(*Concerning the Joseph Bennett Banquet*),—An old proverb says, ‘Man proposes, but God disposes.’ I have been looking

forward to the pleasure of spending a couple of happy hours next Tuesday evening among my friends and colleagues ; unhappily, the various ailings associated with old age (I shall be 82 next March) prevent me from joining you at the Banquet.

“ Please convey my kindest regards to Mr Bennett, coupled with the assurance that his wonderfully elevated style of musical criticism has always encouraged me in my life-work as musical director of the Crystal Palace, and greatly assisted me in my efforts for making Crystal Palace Music a healthful nursery of musical art in England.

“ Wishing our much esteemed friend in his retirement, many years of life, good health, and great happiness.—I am, my dear Mackenzie, yours sincerely,  
AUGUST MANNS ”

This is one of the last letters written by my old friend.

## CHAPTER IX

Henry Hugo Pierson—Appears as Composer at Norwich Festival in 1852—Appears a second time in 1869—"Hezekiah," an unfinished oratorio—Attempt to bribe Davison—Its failure—Dr S. S. Wesley offers to pay Davison for a favourable review in the *Times*—I am asked by him to propose a fee for like service in the *P.M.G.*—Both are declined—Brinley Richards and "God bless the Prince of Wales"—No knighthood—Richards and the Caermarthen Eisteddfod (1867)—He offends as an anti-Nationalist—Sims Reeves : his troubles with the public over "colds"—Not a tippler—A dinner with Reeves and its sequel—Break up too early for Davison—F. Clay, Henry S. Leigh and I are combined for the production of a cantata at the Leeds Festival—Clay having held the matter over so long, committee renounce the contract—Letter from Leigh—Terese Tietjens, a woman of business—Her sharp skirmish with E. T. Smith—Piccolomini, her reply to an offer of marriage—Sophie Cruvelli, her grand Leonora—Her flight from Lumley and London.

SHORTLY before this chapter was written (November 1906), Adelina Patti—to call her by her first and best-known name—retired from public life as a professional singer. The withdrawal may not be final, but it does not affect my rule to keep from this book all personal recollections of living people. For the same reason I bar reminiscences of Christine Nilsson, and a few others—alas, very few—nearly all the artists whose acquaintance I made in the sixties having passed on. 'Tis the fate of age to find its retrospect filled with memorials of the dead :—

“ Let's talk of graves and worms and epitaphs ;  
Make dust our paper, and, with rainy eyes,  
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.”

In 1869 I first saw Henry Hugo Pierson, a gifted musician, wanting, as many of his class are, in a man's full allowance of common sense. Born in 1815, Pierson died in 1873, having spent most of his time in Germany, the land of his adoption. He had influential friends in Norfolk, and probably to them was due the production of his oratorio, “Jerusalem,” at the Norwich Festival of 1852. The work then making considerable effect, it was repeated in Exeter Hall (1853) by the Sacred Harmonic Society, and that, as far as I am aware, was the last heard of it in London. Invited to compose something for the Norwich Festival of 1869, Pierson brought to England a selection from his second, and unfinished, oratorio, “Hezekiah.” With this he might have made a success, but foolish friends, and the defect before indicated, combined to becloud his English prospects. How this result came about I will proceed to tell.

On one of the days of the Festival at Norwich, Davison and I were at dinner at the Castle Hotel when a maid brought in two visiting cards, one bearing the name of Pierson, the other that of a local gentleman. With the cards came an oral message.

“The gentlemen would like to speak with you, Mr Davison, please.”

Thus the servant, and to her Davison :—

“ My compliments to them, Anne, and I am at dinner with a friend.”

Anne retired, but, after a time, came back :—

“ If you please, sir, the gentlemen beg that you will see them for a few moments downstairs.”

Davison seemed a little irritated by this persistency, and, speaking abruptly, said :—

“ Tell the gentlemen that I cannot possibly see them.”

Again the maid retired, and, after a longer interval than before, again she presented herself, on this occasion with a letter in her hand :—

“ If you please, sir, the gentlemen told me to give you this.”

Anne having finally quitted the room, Davison, in the manner of one bored, opened the envelope, and proceeded to draw forth its contents. At once the unmistakable rustle of bank-notes—even poor journalists know the sound !—revealed their nature, and Davison, passing two autographs of Abraham Newland, or some other servant of the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street, over to me, eagerly read the accompanying letter, the purpose of which was by no means obscurely stated. That night the notes went to London, and to the office of the *Times*. Next morning the would-be bribers were invited by the editor to call in person at his office and receive back the sum for which they thought his musical critic's honesty could be bought. They never did call, and the money, if I rightly remember, went into the coffers of a charity.

Curiously enough, I was witness to another attempt upon the virtue of J. W. D., the offender in this case being none other than Dr S. S. Wesley, a commanding musical genius, as all the world knows, and, perhaps for that reason, a man whose transactions, of the earth earthy, should have been carried out for, not by, him. Let me premise that Wesley had published a new edition of his "European Psalmist," revised and enlarged, and was naturally anxious that the book should be reviewed in friendly fashion by important journals.

One day when Davison and I were busily editing the forthcoming number of the *Musical World*, Dr Wesley presented himself with a copy of the new edition under his arm, and, upon his tongue, a request that Davison would kindly accept it. There was no difficulty on that point, but it was clear that our visitor had more to say. He moved restlessly in his chair, grimaced, looked in my direction, jerked his head towards the door, and at last made it evident to the critic of the *Times* that a private interview was desired. Whereupon the two men passed to another room. A little later I heard the front door close upon the visitor, and Davison reappeared laughing. He told me that Wesley, after remarking that a review of the "European Psalmist" in the *Times* was specially desirable, stated that he could not expect Davison to spend time and labour upon such an article without remuneration. Forthwith he took a bank-note from his pocket and placed it in Davison's



hand. At once the critic replaced the note in the pocket whence it had been drawn and joked the whole transaction away, as he well knew how, presently dismissing his visitor with a promise to notice the new edition briefly as soon as opportunity offered.

Had anyone charged Wesley with attempting flat bribery, he would, I am convinced, have protested indignantly. In my own experience I have met with persons who honestly thought that if a journalist granted such a request as that made by Wesley to Davison he was entitled to be paid by the man whom he had obliged. This, of course, is not so. The editor pays for all work done on his journal, and the scribe is manifestly at fault who takes a second payment from an outsider. Wesley, good, simple man, was one of the honest sinners ; a fact of which I am the more convinced, because on one occasion he approached me to the same end as in Davison's case, even committing the indiscretion to paper. Here is the letter referred to :—

“ GLOUCESTER, *February 20*

“ MY DEAR SIR,—Let me ask what you would be pleased to accept for writing me a review of my ‘European Psalmist’ for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, provided they would insert it wholly.

“ I feel it a hardship after devoting so much time, and acting from motives which were higher than ordinary—for I went with a determination to supply

true music (with the exception of only 3 or 4 inferior tunes) and to try to keep the taste to that which was masterly and deserving, and yet I am merely herded with the many things made to sell, and am unnoticed by the press after so many years' labour, though I have letters from all my subscribers (nearly all) expressing the greatest pleasure at my work, and in terms which are a great relief to me after keeping them waiting for their copies at least 12 years—some of them, I should say.

“I believe I shall not feel dissatisfied with what you will fix, if you will fix.

“I beg to return the Cathedrals book.<sup>1</sup> Pity that that subject is stagnant. We are working railways with the rolling stock of Henry VIII.'s reign.—I am, faithfully yours,

“S. S. WESLEY”

I did not “fix,” but, nevertheless, reviewed the book, if not in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, then in one or other of the papers with which I was at that time connected.

There can be no doubt that Rumour's many tongues were, now and again, busy with Davison as a bribe-taker. But they babbled only lies. It was a matter of course that he should have enemies. The *Times*, at that period, was a journal of influence now hard to conceive as the possession of a single paper, and in that connexion must be considered the exceptional ability of the *Times* critic. At the

<sup>1</sup> A volume of Cathedral statutes, which I had lent him.

height of his power, and for many years, every musician, indeed every man who had a musical log to roll, sought to gain his favour. Of course, all the disappointed ones became more or less his enemies, prepared to believe anything concerning him which was not to his credit. My own conviction is—and I knew him as did very few others, and was entirely in his confidence—that, while no less moved by personal sympathy than the rest of us, in the discharge of his duties as a critic, and in all the relations therewith connected, he earnestly strove to be just and upright.

Who now thinks of Brinley Richards? It may be that in old volumes of pianoforte music, to be found under ancient roofs in sequestered nooks of English life, the curious searcher may find his “Warblings at Eve” bound up with “The Maiden’s Prayer” and Sidney Smith’s “Cascade of Pearls.” Yet Richards had in his time a certain vogue, both as pianoforte teacher and as a composer for that household instrument. I recall a “Study on the Black Keys” which, of its kind, was a little masterpiece. But his great claim to remembrance lies in the fact that he composed the music of “God bless the Prince of Wales”—a national song not far behind the “Marseillaise” in the good fortune of immediate popular acceptance. With the recognition of that patriotic effusion, Richards became an object of envy, the more because everybody expected that, on account of it, he would receive a

knighthood. In all quarters was heard the voice of the scorner belittling his melody. Dr Henry John Gauntlett, who contributed to a journal styled the *Orchestra*, wrote a sort of analysis of the tune, seeking to show that all its phrases were borrowed, and giving quotations as what he thought to be proof. The melody lived on ; the *Orchestra* 'twas that died. Richards's tune is undoubtedly commonplace, but it still survives, albeit a perfervid nationalism would gladly substitute "Land of my Fathers." I am of those who think that, as honours go in this country, Richards was entitled to the privilege, if such it be, of styling himself "Sir." But for him the "fountain of honour" proved to be dry, and the composer of "God bless the Prince of Wales" took nothing by his loyalty. That he was disappointed there is reason to think, but he never paraded this feeling. Indeed, he never mentioned the matter, to my knowledge, for which reticence I respected him the more.

My acquaintance with Brinley Richards began in Caermarthen, his native town, where, in the early autumn of 1867, was held a "Grand National Eisteddfod," the musical departments of which had been placed in the hands of the town's most famous musical son. Brinley's first step as director, though taken with the best intentions, was a mistake. It is always a mistake to go over the heads of your public, which Richards did when he took down from London the best artists that his resources enabled him to engage, and when he

placed in the musical programmes many works more or less classical in character, to the exclusion of Welsh songs. From this sprang troubles. The public, or, rather, the popular element in the gatherings, soon showed that they had a large bone to pick with the musical director. They shouted down the classical with the cry of "Cymraeg," and clamoured for a favourite bardic vocalist, whose name (Llew Lwyfo) in the hierarchy was rendered in English by Davison as "The Roaring Lion." This gentleman, whom it would be excess of courtesy to call an artist, happened to be in Caermarthen, probably by arrangement, and was engaged, to stop clamour. Against him the real artists had no chance, although among them were Edith Wynne, Janet Whytock-Patey, Henry Lazarus, John Thomas and Lewis Thomas, to say nothing of Brinley Richards himself. Through one cause and another the Eisteddfod was a serious failure. Everything went wrong ; the weather most of all,

"The rain it rained every day,  
And the wind was never weary."

The audience listened under umbrellas, the roof of the "pavilion" being leaky ; the instrumental soloists played under like protection (I preserve a mental photograph of Lazarus performing while a man held a "gamp" between him and the drippings from above), and the pianoforte had, at intervals, to be wheeled about the platform in search of a dry place. Looking at the fiasco, the committee

became concerned to find a scape-goat which, laden with the sins of all, could be driven to the barren shore of the Dead Sea. It was easy to fix upon poor Richards. I do not suppose that the managers held him guilty of the rain, but musical failure lay obviously at the door of the musical director—the almost denationalised Welshman from London. At once the fountains of abuse were turned on, and Richards suffered all that patient merit is so often obliged to take from the unworthy. On one occasion he exposed his sorrows to my sympathy. Writing to me shortly after his appointment as scapegoat, he said :—

“The local committee, or whoever the party may be who have shown a silly spite towards myself in the recent festival, have forgotten how much I have lost, and how very little I have gained, by my connection (with), and efforts on behalf of, Welsh meetings. I owe Wales little beyond my birth, for every thing I have obtained in my professional life I owe to England alone. The people in Wales—or, rather, an illiberal portion—seem irritated with me for what I said about English writers at the Caermarthen meeting, and, above all, at my exclusion of the ‘Roaring Lion.’ Perhaps, some day, they will acknowledge their error. I can survive it.”

He survived it eighteen years, and he felt the heavy blow and great discouragement of the wretched Eisteddfod all the time. Richards was





"SOUND AN ALARM!"



a tall, thin man, with a small head and large, dark eyes, as gentle as those of a gazelle. He played his own compositions singularly well.

Sims Reeves, from the time when I made his acquaintance in the early sixties to the beginning of his lamentable decline, lived pretty much a detached life—detached, that is to say, from his fellow-artists, and what is called “society.” In musical circles, whether assembled for a feast of reason, or a flow of soul, he was rarely, or never seen. Yet the famous tenor did not lack the virtues which make for hospitality. He could be a genial companion, and was at his best when permitted to entertain a few friends in his pleasant house on the heights of Norwood. This did not happen too often; Mrs Reeves keeping him ever under affectionate, and effectual supervision, but for which, I verily believe, many more apologies for broken engagements would have been tendered to an incredulous public. At that time it was a matter of common report not only that Reeves “drank,” but that devotion to the pleasures of the table, rather than the infirmity of a very delicate throat, explained many absences from duty. The public would not believe in Reeves’s “colds,” and unmistakably expressed their want of faith in the formal apologies so often made by nervous and faltering concert officials. Beyond question the public were wrong. I had as many opportunities of observation as were necessary for the conclusion

just stated, and not once did I see him drink anything but claret, a very modest allowance even of that being the rule. I am glad to bear this testimony, as it may go some way to the removal of an injustice.

With regard to the many disappointments suffered by the public at the hands of their favourite tenor, I will quote a passage from one of Reeves's letters :—

“I have caught a wee bit of a cold, but hope to be all square for to-morrow night. I am almost sure I shall. It is more fatigue than anything else. I had such terribly hard work last week at Brum.”

Here we have a real cause of Reeves's reputation as a disappointing artist. No doubt his throat easily tired, and set up slight congestion. This made him anxious and apprehensive, but the extreme precaution which became the rule of his life largely owed its existence to the attentions of Mrs Reeves, whose “coddling” of her husband gave rise to many ludicrous stories. She was always nervously concerned lest want of prudence should loose the silver cord and break the golden bowl.

Among the opportunities which I had of observing Reeves under convivial circumstances was one still very clearly in remembrance. Davison and I, being due at a certain Crystal Palace concert, agreed that it would be a good thing to wind up the day by dining and spending the evening with

the great tenor and his family. Reeves welcomed the proposal, and as the sun went down on Beulah Hill at the time appointed, two critics might have been observed ascending its gentle slope. To our surprise, we found at "Grange Mount," as fellow guests, Arthur Sullivan and "Fred" Clay. A merry evening seemed in store, for, of the five men at the table, three were noted causeurs. The only danger was that Davison would resent the rivalry of his juniors, and either sulk or talk them down. However, the dinner went off excellently well, and Reeves was radiant. Only myself, perhaps, knew how likely it was that there would be trouble in getting Davison away. Always difficult to move on such occasions, the great critic thought nothing of keeping his host out of bed through all the little hours of the night, himself going home with the milk in the morning.

Towards eleven o'clock Reeves announced that he would send us to London in his carriage, and, a little later, a servant brought the news that the vehicle was at the gate. Now began the tug of war. Davison bestowed no manner of notice upon the twofold hint, but, glass in hand, poured forth stories, witticisms and paradoxes in wasteful profusion. Nor did the stream cease to flow when his fellow guests put on their overcoats and stood ready in the hall. The hour was far too early for the breaking up of a merry party, and the dispersal of the genial atmosphere in which the most enjoyable of our friend's moments were spent. Sullivan

prayed, and Clay entreated, while Reeves, who as host, could not very well do the like, looked imploringly at his passive resister. Nothing, however, could move J.W.D. from the spot where, still glass in hand, he stood, like Tennyson's tower, "four-square to all the winds that blow." Time went on. The horses in waiting could be heard pacing up and down as a precaution against the chill of the night, and Mrs Reeves no longer sought to hide her vexation. At length Reeves came to me, as I stood watching the struggle. "You have more influence with Davison than anybody, do what you can to get him outside." To that end I did my best, at length, by quiet reasoning, and a little gentle compulsion, getting my friend's feet over the threshold. That accomplished, Reeves closed the door with a bang. Meanwhile Sullivan and Clay had quitted the field of action, and retreated into the carriage, where I found them silent and melancholy. "So home, and to bed," as Mr Secretary Pepys, another boon companion, and eke musical man, was wont to observe. Along two miles of the way home our great critic was plainly out of temper. He fell to rating poor, innocent Sullivan and Clay: "You call yourselves composers!" quotha, and then, with a contemptuous finger-snap, "Pooh, pooh!" But to all that was said, the "boys" answered not a word.

The adventures of that night did not end with an outburst of Davison's restored affection for the

youngsters, whom we dropped at the point nearest their respective homes. The next stop was at Davison's rooms in Tavistock Place. I saw my friend into his sitting-room, and remained there while the coachman consumed a liberal allowance of whiskey and soda, afterwards setting out for my own quarters in Melina Place, Grove End Road. The carriage did not reach so far, though I did. It chanced that St John's Wood Road was "up," and a mound of earth stretched partly across the thoroughfare. Into this obstacle, either because the coachman was asleep, or the warning lights had been extinguished, the horses charged. One fell, else probably both would have tumbled into the yawning excavation which awaited them. Happily, no harm was done to man or beast, and the equipage reached home in broadest daylight.

I cannot answer for Sullivan or Clay, but neither Davison nor I dined with Reeves again. I well remember that the critic once wired to the tenor: "Bennett and I will go on to you from the C.P. tomorrow." To this came a reply of two words: "Please don't." We didn't.

When at Birmingham for the Festival of 1870, I had a glimpse of Reeves in his study. It was then that Julius Benedict's "St Peter" made its début, and the famous artist had been "cast" for the tenor solos. Calling at his hotel early in the week, I found Reeves, with an accompanist, working at "Oh, that my head were waters," one of the most pathetic airs in the oratorio. I begged

him not to stop, and then it appeared that the great singer's practice was to get his songs well into his memory, and rehearse them as though they belonged to opera, using the gestures, and adopting the facial expression and bodily attitudes which would be called for on the lyric stage. Surely this is an excellent method of getting at the heart of a song, but, whether or no, I never heard Reeves sing better than he did under the stimulus of physical movements.

Poor Reeve's decadence was a prolonged, and, for his friends as well as himself, a painful process. His star sank to its setting under mournful conditions, but upon this matter I do not care to dwell. The entire decline called for infinite pity and the silence of oblivion.

Reference to Frederic Clay, in connection with the dinner at "Grange Mount," reminds me that, in 1883, I came very near association with him, and Henry S. Leigh, in the preparation of a work for the Leeds Festival of that year. The committee having asked Clay for a cantata, terms were agreed upon, and Byron's "Sardanapalus" was accepted as a fitting theme. So far, good, but the transaction had got no farther when, in July 1882, Clay wrote that the poem presented many difficulties, which, however, he would overcome, if at all possible. In April '83, six months from the festival, the Committee heard from the composer that he had given up "Sardanapalus" and chosen

a new subject, which he had placed in my hands, with a reservation that, time being so short, Leigh should write the lyrics. Unfortunately, I do not now possess the letter which conveyed Clay's proposal to me, and, for lack of it, I cannot say what the subject was. Whatever it may have been, Leigh and myself were soon invited to dismiss it from our minds, the Committee having resolved to wait for Clay no longer. The associate-librettists *in posse* took the matter wholly in the spirit of the letter addressed to me at this juncture by my proposed colleague:—

“35 STRAND, *Thursday*

“MY DEAR SIR,—Mr Clay tells me the cantata will not be wanted, so our collaboration comes to the ground. I looked forward with pleasure to this business, and am proportionately disappointed.

“*Bis aliter visum*, which means in classic English, ‘That little affair ain’t come off’; so our appointment for to-morrow don’t come off neither.

“Hoping on some early occasion to make your personal acquaintance, I remain, yours very truly,

“HENRY S. LEIGH”

Theresa Tietjens, so long a shining light of music in England, was in personal character, as in her artistry, a fine example of the Strong Woman. A more gracious and amiable lady could not be, but, in all business matters which concerned the vocation she adorned, the great

singer could very well take care of herself; at any rate, while she was entirely free to act. Some impressions as to this may be gathered from a letter addressed by her to E. T. Smith, under whom, as manager of Her Majesty's Theatre, she was then serving. Smith was an adventurous person, who, having already got control of "Old Drury," secured the opera-house in the Haymarket on the downfall of Benjamin Lumley, taking over at the same time his predecessor's artists, Tietjens among them. Smith, it appears, had thoughts of engaging Giulia Grisi, who had, some time before, left Covent Garden, but was supposed not to have quite wearied of the English public and their guineas. Grisi, then fifty years old, was not a very formidable rival, but Tietjens would gladly have been spared an encounter with an artist so famous in the recent past. She, probably, said as much to Smith, and that there were differences is pretty clear. At length, Smith surrendered, and Grisi did not appear. Meanwhile, Tietjens wrote to her manager as follows :—

"HOTEL DE L'EUROPE,  
3rd March 1861

"DEAR MR SMITH,—I have received your kind letter, and feel much pleased that you commence to learn (though late) where your interest lies—however, let bygones pass away, and let me see how much of your letter and profession of friendship you intend to carry out. You by now have learn'd that I am not the only difficult artist



you have had to deal with ; on the contrary, you have never known me to be one atom behind in my duty, and you can never say I have ever disappointed you. It is true you have thought proper to announce me to sing when you had no right ; and afterwards, because I have done so, you have thought proper to forget yourself as a gentleman, but, however, all now is past.

“I shall look upon Grisi with respect and admiration for the great position she has occupied, and you may be assured envy will be far from my mind. If Madame Grisi wishes to sing my repertoire I shall not make any difficulty, as I respect always her age and her great reputation, but I cannot give you the permission to announce me in second-rate rôles ; that, my dear Smith, I cannot do, with all the friendship I have for you and Grisi. You must think what a step I would descend. I am willing to assist Madame Grisi wherever I can, and she will be pleased with her young rival. Since I have played in Italie, and after that enormous success I have had, I am more confident than ever of my own power, and with every respect for Grisi and friendship for you, I must think of my own position.

“Good-bye, dear Mr Smith, hoping we may continue better friends for the future.—Yours very truly,  
THERESA TIETJENS”

I have transcribed this letter *verb. et lit.*, partly for the sake of its quaint English. A very inter-

esting document it is, while the reference to Grisi's age, and to the writer herself as young (Tietjens was then thirty), savours deliciously of the real feminine.

That the German soprano had had earlier experience of trouble with a manager is clear from the remarks of Lumley,<sup>1</sup> her chief in 1858, who, describing the conflict for supremacy in public favour between Tietjens and the then pet of the town, Piccolomini, says:—

“The triumphant prima donna (Tietjens) seems to have found subject of complaint in the amount of bouquets flung to the little lady (Piccolomini) as far exceeding her own, and likewise in the fact that a distinguished habitu , who always applauded the ‘pet,’ bestowed but a scanty amount of approval upon herself. . . . The ingratitude of some artists is astounding. When her success was still doubtful, the lady was all meekness, and full of fears lest she should not be engaged. Now that it had surpassed her most sanguine expectations the tone adopted towards the direction was entirely changed.”

But in this Tietjens did not differ from the sisterhood generally, and it should be remembered that the writer of the remarks just quoted was a manager with a grievance against the object of them.

The star of little Piccolomini was on the wane

<sup>1</sup> “Reminiscences of the Opera,” p. 443.

in 1859 (she retired in 1860), and August 1, 1859, is the date of a letter written by her to some one who had made an offer of marriage. The original belongs to my collection, but as the suitor's name does not appear in it, and the envelope is missing, curiosity with regard to the bold candidate receives little gratification. I translate the letter, however, for the sake of its entire propriety of thought and utterance, and for the proof it affords that even a very skittish *prima donna* can be, on occasion, a careful and business-like woman. At the time of writing, Piccolomini was in her twenty-fifth year.

“SIR,—I cannot sufficiently express my surprise on receiving your letter from the hands of Mr Smith, and, at the same time, my gratitude for your honourable and flattering intentions as regards myself. The request you have made is so serious that you will recognise the propriety, when one's destiny and happiness are involved, of at least knowing intimately the person to whom one entrusts them. That, unhappily, is not my case, and it rests with you to remove all difficulties.

“The thing that troubles me is the dissatisfaction of your father, but I find that my birth, training and education should remove every obstacle. I am happy to say that my family are independent for their own part, and that the only thing on which they will insist is that I do not live too far from them. It is now for you, Sir, to give me your ideas, it being well understood that, should fate

crown your desires, there are other points to arrange with my family.

“Accept, Sir, the expression of my high consideration.  
MARIA PICCOLOMINI

“LIVERPOOL, *August 1, 1859.*”

The “pet of London” married a Marquis Gaetani in 1863.

Among self-willed prime donne, Sophie Cruvelli was, in her day, a famous example. When a lad in my teens I made two flying visits to London, on each occasion being fortunate enough to hear great artists at Her Majesty's Theatre. In 1848 Sophie Cruvelli was playing there, having made her début at Venice a year earlier, and gained the favourable notice of Lumley. Sophie was not an Italian but a Westphalian German, whose proper patronymic was Crüwell. In 1848, also, Henrietta Sontag returned to Her Majesty's, these Teutonic ladies being the chief figures of the season. I heard both in different years; Sontag in 1849; Cruvelli in 1851—the year of the first great Exhibition, in Hyde Park. The Westphalian played Leonora in Beethoven's “Fidelio” on the night of my unforgettable visit, London having been waiting patiently for this special effort. Fifty-seven years have passed since then, but I distinctly recall the character of Cruvelli's performance as the devoted wife, her appearance and bearing on the stage, and the nature of her

success. In those days many Germans could sing, and *bel canto* was not unknown among them; the day of hard and ugly declamation not having dawned in all its destructive force. But I am even more clear as to Cruvelli's acting than her singing, fine as that undoubtedly was. What an impulsive creation, her Leonora! How grandly she trod the stage, with the free gait and masculine stride of a gallant youth, and how superb, yet how natural, were her poses in the crises of the moving story! My opinion of her, inexperienced though I was, is supported by Lumley in his "Reminiscences." "She was a genius, wild, erratic, reckless, uncontrollable by the dictates of pure, rigid art. This genius was unquenched and unquestionable." Being so constituted, she was, of course, a troublesome artist, and when Lumley's enterprise seemed to be approaching disaster, and the rats began to leave it, she left with the rats. Going to Paris, she ran away once more, in order, mayhap, to prove her impartiality as between the two western nations. Oh, these "first ladies!"

## CHAPTER X

Erminia Rudersdorff as vocalist and librettist—I assist her in her literary capacity—Patrick Gilmore engages her to take part in a national festival at Boston, Mass.—Her unflattering opinion of the man and his festival—A pungent letter—Prosper Sainton—His early struggles—Help in need—Lüders—A curiously jealous friend—Sainton's correspondence with Hector Berlioz—Various letters.

MADAME RUDESDORFF came to England in 1854, but I did not make her acquaintance till about 1866. She was worth knowing. A woman of powerful brain, and intelligent far beyond the common measure of her sex, or, for that matter, of the sex which is "opposite" to hers; endowed with strong dramatic impulses, and mighty in the utterance of passionate feeling. A good musician, equipped with a voice of exceptional power, this German lady had the ball before her feet from the outset of the game. Her true place was on the lyric stage as a dramatic singer in great and vigorous parts, but in England, where, fifty years ago, there was little scope for a stage singer (there is not much now), needs must that such an artist take to the concert platform. In large measure Rudersdorff did this, so well keeping her place against many rivals that she held it till, in 1871, she left England for a season in America, where, such was the favour extended to her vocal

power, teaching gifts, and notable personality, Boston retained her till her death in February, 1882.

“*Medea*,” a scena for soprano and orchestra, by Alberto Randegger, was produced at a Gewandhaus concert, Leipzig, in 1869, with Rudersdorff as vocalist. Brought to England in due course, it was thought advisable to print an English version of the text, as well as the original Italian. It says much for Madame Rudersdorff’s versatility that she was not only the singer in this work, but also the author of both versions of the text. She had, however, some doubt of her capacity to deal with English verse, and this led to the following letter :—

“ 15 MARLBOROUGH ROAD, ST JOHN’S WOOD

“MY DEAR MR BENNETT,—Most humbly I approach you with a great petition, and, before laying it at your feet, beg you at once to grant it. I know it is a shame to bother you, and add to your manifold labours, but neither librettist nor composer know to whom to turn but to you, and, therefore, you must be good and kind, and do this we ask of you ; which is to look over the accompanying translation of Randegger’s ‘*Medea*,’ and say if it will do to print in the book of words for February 24, and whether it may even be printed under the Italian words of the music, as the Scena is to be published, mind. What I have done is an almost literal translation, often word fitting under word. There is scarcely a note added or omitted,

and the accents fall always on the same notes as in the Italian. Under such conditions the language, and more so the poetry, must be defective and unequal. Bearing this in mind, and that such is Randegger's wish, will you most kindly look it over, and smooth it down as much as possible? You would thereby oblige us both immensely.

—Yours most sincerely,

“ERMINIA RUDERSDORFF”

Most probably I did as I was asked to do, but on that point I have no positive recollection. At a later period, Madame Rudersdorff wrote the words of a cantata, “Fridolin,” for the same composer, taking her subject, as need hardly be said, from Schiller's poem. In this case, also, such help as I could render was sought.

A very enterprising impresario, Patrick Gilmore by name, came to London from America, in 1871, on business connected with a leviathan musical festival to be given at Boston, Mass., in honour of the United States Centenary (1872). We in England had been boasting of our 4000 performers at the Handel Festivals; Gilmore, like a true Yankee worshipper of the colossal, talked of 20,000, who, not in point of numbers only, were to “whip creation.” In furtherance of this vast project, the American had designs upon the sympathy and help of English journalists, and took the common course, supposed to be very efficacious, of inviting members



of that body to dinner, one or two at a time, and in a studiously casual and informal way. I accepted his hospitality, more with an eye to information worth printing than to what Clement Scott used to call "chicken and champagne." During the repast, I carefully noted what my host had to say—it was much—and did not feel at all impressed by the artistic value of his scheme, which I foresaw would prove to be a gigantic vulgarity. Certain artists were engaged by Gilmore in England, among them Madame Rudersdorff and Madame Arabella Goddard, then our leading English pianist. The full story of this enterprise has no rightful place here, but I must allow Madame Rudersdorff to give forcible and characteristic expression to feelings on matters personal to herself:—

"SPRINGFIELD, MASS., *July* 19, 1872

"MY DEAR MR BENNETT—Contrary to all my resolutions and intentions, I am going to remain in this country up to next spring. I have my return ticket, which I shall lose, as the offers which I have received here ever since that humbuggy festival are too tempting for me to refuse them. All the larger Societies of the United States came forward with offers for oratorios in the autumn and winter, and I settled at once. . . . Mr Gilmore, whom I snubbed because he would not bring out the compositions Sir Julius Benedict and Mr Randegger had taken the trouble to write for

him, revenged himself by writing up Madame Leutner to the skies.<sup>1</sup> How is it that you great critics in London and also the Germans never found out that she was *the* singer? However, the New Yorkers are like yourselves. She has been giving concerts in their city, and they are abusing her terribly, saying that the large locale at Boston was delusive, and that she proves to be nothing when heard in a proper room.

“Altogether the festival has been a terrible humbug and failure. It was a hideous nightmare, and all are awaking, and trying to believe it never took place. A. B. will tell you of my own glorious successes, and of that never-to-be-forgotten scene when I sang ‘God save the Queen.’ It is my almost only pleasant recollection, for what do I care for all my other encores and recalls in such a place? But that frantic recall, that rising of the mass to wave their handkerchiefs and hats, their insistence upon an encore, and that shout for England when I brought on Dan Godfrey to play for my encore, I shall never forget. It was the best thing at the Jubilee, although Gilmore spoilt the beginning by making the organ play the first part twice over. The chorus came in, and it was awful till I came to the rescue. Godfrey can tell you of that scene.

“The real Bostonians were intensely disgusted

<sup>1</sup> Madame Leutner was a good artist, and the reports of her from New York were probably affected by the Empire City’s jealousy of the Hub of the Universe in matters of art.





à son ami Davignon  
Londres 15 Juillet. 1858. T. Johnston

with this big show. All the gentlemen's houses were shut up, and all real musicians left the city. The Music Committee were never once called, and Gilmore and his private secretary made the programmes. Such programmes! See what John Dwight says. Upon my word, had I not my £1500 in my pocket (my only excuse) I should never hold up my head again for having been concerned in such a 'thing.' Dear Mr Bennett, such gigantic outbursts are really and truly distressing. . . . There was great discontent among the chorus, and he will never get them together again. Thank God.—Yours sincerely,

“ERMINIA RUDERSDORFF”

Madame Rudersdorff took a very personal view of Gilmore's "gigantic outburst," but clearly it is not worth while to go further into the matter. "Gorgons and hydras, and Chimeras dire," once suffered, should be consigned to their special limbo. Not to suffer them would be better still, but who is sufficient to the end of such a vast avoidance?

It is most likely that I first met Prosper Sainton at an early period in my career as a critic, but no definite recollection on the point remains with me; nor have I any letter of his earlier in date than 1872, in which year such acquaintance as we then had became closer, shortly ripening into one of the most intimate friendships it was ever my privilege to share. Sainton was a most lovable man. A

Frenchman of the ardent South, he would explode with the readiness of an irritable geyser, but his outbursts were all in the nature of the sheet lightning that flashes in the summer, being, indeed, more pleasing than terrifying. Amongst musicians he enjoyed high respect and esteem, as well for his personal qualities as for artistic powers which gave him an abiding position, not only as solo violinist and quartet leader, but also as sub-conductor, under Costa, at the Royal Italian Opera and the Sacred Harmonic Society's concerts. However markedly the lines fell to Sainton in pleasant places from the time when he had secured a footing in this country, his earlier experiences were often in the wilderness and sometimes in the desert. He used to tell me of occasions in his wanderings about Europe when it was by no means certain where his next meal would be found. Chance now and then favoured him meagrely, as one day in Vienna. Strolling about the Prater there, he happened upon a casual acquaintance who was enjoying wine and biscuits at a refreshment table. Him did Sainton approach with a greeting, taking a chair at the same table, but giving no order. The other man, noticing this, and having gone through the same mill himself, invited the young Frenchman to take a glass of wine. The offer was at once accepted, as was the tender of some biscuits, after which Sainton resumed his walk, just a little comforted. Next day, he was again in the Prater, where once more he chanced on his acquaintance of the wine and

biscuits, who forthwith renewed his offer of those light refreshments. Sainton, hungry as before, made hearty inroads on the solid part of the feast ; his host, also as before, taking note, and therefrom arriving at a conclusion. Presently he spoke : " You seem fond of biscuits, you." This broke through a very natural reserve ; Sainton made known his position, and accepted,—how gladly !—an invitation to break his fast every day with the agent and representative of Providence, whose commissariat was not, thenceforth, limited to wine and biscuits.

Again wandering with his fiddle, the French artist found himself at St Petersburg, where Fortune, as in other places, proved sometimes favourable, sometimes frowning. Thence Sainton made his way to Stockholm, where he met with another agent of benignant Heaven in the form of a German musician—composer and what not—named Lüders. A greater contrast than that of these two men could hardly be conceived, but deep is the mystery of human affinities, and, perhaps because of Sainton's unlikeness to himself, Lüders took kindly to him, and rendered him material service. Several years later they met in London, where Sainton had entered upon an era of prosperity, his friend doing by no means so well. Now was the moment for the Frenchman to prove that, when helping him in the old Scandinavian time, the German had cast his bread upon waters which return it (with interest) after many days. Sainton

rose to the occasion like the excellent, true-hearted man he was, and it is not too much to say that, to the end of his days, the comforts of Lüders were very largely secured by the very practical gratitude of his old friend. This was the more to the donor's credit, because Lüders was a very difficult man to deal with. His gratitude to his benefactor, for example, took the form of jealousy directed against Sainton's other friends. He dined with the Saintons nearly every day, much preferring to do so with no other guest present. If a particular "chum" of the house-master put in an appearance, Lüders would sit silent and glowering in a manner not at all adapted to make the intrusive convive comfortable. No notice was taken of his little ways. Was he not Lüders, the sometime helpful? I had almost forgotten to add that Lüders bitterly resented Sainton's marriage. Charlotte Dolby was a rival indeed, and for a while he declined to meet her.

It is easy to fill with a special interest the gap between Sainton's settlement in London, and the ripening into friendship of our acquaintance. Much happened during those years. Berlioz came to London in 1852, and Wagner followed three years later. With each master Sainton became friendly, using his influence with the Philharmonic directors in favour of the second, and renewing an old acquaintance with the first. In my possession are a few letters of the French composer, addressed to his sympathetic countryman in



London, and for the sake of their interest the reader, I trust, will find it easy to pardon their insertion here.

The first letter shows that, as early as 1850, Berlioz was disposed to visit London, and Sainton willing to aid him in the matter:—

“PARIS, 30 *Septembre* 1850,  
19 Rue de Boursault

“MON CHER SAINTON,—Je vous remercie mille fois de vos soins et de vos bonnes intentions. Je crois que vous avez bien fait d’attendre le retour de Balfe; il vaut mieux lui remettre vous même ma lettre, et lui parler. J’ai reçu dernièrement la visite de M. Beale fils. Il venait de la part de son père me demander si je pouvais accepter un engagement au mois de Mai prochain pour venir diriger l’exécution de quelques unes de mes compositions à Hanover Square Rooms, dans les Concerts que M. Beale doit donner à cette époque. J’ai répondu affirmativement, quoique M. Beale fils ne m’ait rien dit des conditions. Tachez donc de savoir adroitement ce que c’est de ce projet; je vous serais fort obligé de me faire part de ce que vous apprendrez. Mille amitiés sincères.—Votre tout dévoué,

“HECTOR BERLIOZ”

Berlioz spent some part of 1852 in London as conductor of the New Philharmonic Concerts. The friends then saw much of each other, and also in 1853, when the French master directed the production of his opera, “Benvenuto Cellini,” at

Covent Garden. Following the representation, a committee was formed to arrange a benefit concert for the composer. The project came to nothing, Berlioz having to leave England before arrangements could be perfected. That his departure was hurried the following note to Sainton shows :—

“ MON CHER SAINTON,—Je pars Samedi prochain et j’ai tant de choses à faire demain qu’il me sera impossible de me rendre à votre aimable invitation. Excusez moi donc. Je viens d’écrire à M. Costa pour le prier de transmettre mes remerciements à MM. les artistes de l’orchestre de Covent Garden pour leur offre gracieuse de prendre part à l’exécution du concert qui ne peut plus avoir lieu.

“ J’écris aussi à Beale pour remercier les membres du Comité dont vous fait partie de la généreuse et charmante idée qu’ils ont eue de publier une édition anglaise de mon “Faust.” Il est impossible d’être plus délicatement bon et plus artiste en même temps.—Votre bien dévoué,

“ H. BERLIOZ

“ LONDRES, 8 *Juillet* 1853.”

On the same day, Berlioz sent a gracious letter to Mr Smythson, chorus-master at Covent Garden.

“ MON CHER MONSIEUR SMYTHSON,—Le concert pour lequel Mesdames et Messieurs les artistes de Chœurs de Covent Garden m’avaient si généreusement accordé leur concours ne pourra avoir lieu.

“Je ne suis pas moins profondément touché du témoignage de sympathie que les artistes m'ont donné à cette occasion. Veuillez les remercier de ma part et les assurer que je suis plus heureux et plus fier de cette preuve d'amitié que si j'eusse donné le plus magnifique concert dans les conditions ordinaires.

“Laissez-moi vous dire aussi combien je suis reconnaissant des peines que vous avez prises pour les études de “Benvenuto Cellini,” et vous prier de croire aux sentiments distingués de votre tout dévoué,  
HECTOR BERLIOZ”

In 1856, Sainton was much interested in the lady, whom, four years later, he took to wife. Some impetuous reader may here demand why, if he were on excellent terms with Miss Dolby in 1856, he waited till 1860 before enforcing a decision. I can answer that on the authority of the persons most concerned. No ardour was wanting to the lover, but the gifted and stately woman, always so self-possessed and dignified, seemed too formidable for any pretensions which Sainton could make. So he worshipped and waited till, one day, when the pair were touring with a concert company, they found themselves two in a compartment. Resolved then to challenge fate, Sainton declared his love, and put the momentous question. This was the answer: “Prosper, why did you not ask me before?”

Miss Dolby made a professional tour on the

Continent in 1856, taking with her a party in which Sainton was a distinguished figure. It was her solo violinist who wrote to his friend Berlioz, asking advice as to the business part of a proposed concert in Paris. Replying, the French master indited quite a full and informing letter :—

“19 RUE DE BOURSAULT,  
16 *Janvier* 1856

“MON CHER SAINTON,—A la fin de ce mois je pars pour l'Allemagne où je ne sais pas bien précisément combien de temps je resterai. En outre on me fait diverses propositions pour la Belgique pour le mois de mars, et, si ce que je demande pour ces concerts Belges peut se réaliser, j'accepterai les offres qui me sont faites.

“Il est donc extrêmement probable que je ne serai pas à Paris au mois de mars. Sans cela vous ne devez pas douter du plaisir que j'aurais eu à me mettre entièrement à la disposition de Miss Dolby, et d'organiser et à diriger son concert. J'ai reçu bien des politesses et des marques de bon confraternité des artistes anglais ; j'eusse donc été trop heureux de pouvoir être agréable (mais sans termes quelconques) à une personne aussi distinguée sous tous les rapports que Miss Dolby.

“Je vais en tous cas retenir la salle de Herz pour le Jeudi qui suivra le 9 mars.

“Voici à peu près exactement les frais d'un concert dans le genre de celui que Miss Dolby veut donner :

<b>" La Salle éclairée</b>	.	.	<b>300 francs</b>	
<b>L'orchestre de 54 musiciens</b>			<b>800</b>	<b>„</b>
<b>Droit des pauvres</b>	.	.	<b>100</b>	<b>„ peut-être moins</b>
<b>Affiches et billets</b>	.	.	<b>250</b>	<b>„ à peu près</b>
<b>Location d'instruments</b>	.		<b>32</b>	<b>„</b>
<b>M. Gouffier ou</b>	}	<b>organisateur</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>„</b>
<b>M. Belloni</b>				
<b>Tilmant, chef d'orchestre (c'est le seul que je vous conseille de prendre)</b>	<b>Je ne sais pas ses conditions.</b>			

" Je doute que Prudent veut jouer et que le directeur de l'Opéra permette à Roger de chanter. Mais quand Mlle. Dolby sera ici pour faire elle-même des démarches elle obtiendra plus aisément. Quant à vous, mon cher Sainton, nul doute qu'un beau succès vous attende, et que votre nom ne donne beaucoup d'attrait au programme de Miss Dolby. Lefort est assez aimé du public.

" La salle contient 600 places ; Miss Dolby peut mettre les prix à 10 francs et 5 francs. Il y a près de 60 billets à donner aux journaux pour les annonces et pour les critiques.

" Voilà, mon cher Sainton, tous les détails que je puis vous donner sur le triste sujet des concerts de Paris. Je ne vais pas à Londres cette année. Beale vient de m'écrire que nous n'avons aucune chance de succès, à cause de la fièvre Lind, qui rend toute entreprise musicale impossible.

" Je n'ai pas entendu parler de la Philharmonique de Hanover Square. Qui a-t-on pris pour chef d'orchestre?—Tout à vous, H. BERLIOZ "

The mention of a "Lind" fever in 1856 is

accounted for by the fact that Madame Goldschmidt returned to this country in that year. On her arrival the epidemic broke out afresh.

There is a second business letter on the subject of Miss Dolby's concert.

"19, RUE DE BOURSAULT

"MON CHER SAINTON,—Tilmant passe le moitié de sa vie à la campagne ; il vaut mieux lui écrire à l'Opéra Comique (M. Tilmant, chef d'orchestre au théâtre de l'Opéra Comique). La répétition est comprise dans les 800 fr. qui coute l'orchestre. Au reste je crois que vous pourriez diminuer un peu le nombre des instruments à cordes pour la Salle Herz. 8 premiers violins, 8 seconds, 4 altos, 4 basses, et 4 c. basses me paraissent suffisantes, à moins que vous ne fassiez exécuté quelque grande symphonie (ce que je ne suppose pas).

"Belloni n'est pas à Paris. Il organise en province les concerts de Vieuxtemps. Il revient à la fin de ce mois. Il vous dira tout ce qu'il faut faire pour la presse ; il y aura une visite à faire à Fiorentino, à Escudier, et c'est tout (et à Bowes, rédacteur du 'Galignani's Messenger') ; ce dernier est surtout important à cause du public anglais de Paris.—Tout à vous, H. BERLIOZ"

At the date of the above letter, Fiorentino was the most powerful critic in Paris, and politic artists bore the fact in mind. Recognition of his value took the form of a personal call, and something left on the mantelpiece. On the point of this

something the critic was as exacting as the Father of the Marshalsea in "Little Dorrit," and when the offering failed, the delinquent was likely to read that, though he sang with his usual ability, there was evidence to show that his memory was not what it once was. Davison, who knew Fiorentino well, told me that his Parisian colleague used to rate him for not sailing on the same tack. "I shall die rich," he would say, "and you will die poor. What the better are you for your poverty?"

Once established in London, Sainton lived a life of success. The stream that carried him along rarely became broken water, thanks not only to his ability as an artist, but also to the fact that he was a prince among good fellows. To the quick feeling of a Southern Frenchman, he joined the solid qualities that are regarded as specially English. The blend was piquant and attractive. He loved much the land which had given him one of the best of wives and an artistic position that nothing could shake, but he never ceased to be before all a Frenchman, and at seasons of leisure he would cross the Channel to a pretty little country-house near Boulogne (this he had bought of Reichardt, the tenor) with the gladness of a school-boy going home on holiday. That he was made miserable by the thick-coming disasters of the Franco-Prussian War can readily be imagined; the only set-off, if there was one at all, being the fact that his own Royalist party stood a chance of having a call to wipe up the mess. But even

that was denied. The fine artist and excellent man had other disappointments. His longing for the red riband of the Légion d'Honneur was never gratified, nor was he engaged at the famous "Pops" as often as he thought to be his due.

The death of Madame Sainton in 1885 ended for her husband the joy of life. He followed her to the Beyond five years later. "The old Lüders" had gone before.



## CHAPTER XI

Henry John Gauntlett—My acquaintance with him in 1855—A re-acquaintance twenty years later—Correspondence *re* my comparison of first and second scores of "Elijah"—His hatred of Davison, expressed in letters—Josiah Pitman, organist of Lincoln's Inn Chapel—Pitman and the Advent tune, "Helmsley"—An extraordinary protest—Pitman leaves the Inn—Sir Charles Halle—An experience in "Society"—His work as pianist and orchestral conductor—A "record" in speed at Bristol—Walter Bache—Von Bülow seeks to annex Davison—Bache calls me a fool—Davison breaks loose thereat—Bache seeks a favour of the "fool"—Carl Rosa—Benjamin Lumley—Frederic Gye—J. H. Mapleson—Amusing volunteer incidents—Reforming the operatic prospectus.

AS far back as 1855 I knew the somewhat eccentric church musician whose name is now under the reader's eye, and then was often on the tongues of musical gossips. In the year just mentioned, Dr Gauntlett held the post of organist at Union Chapel, Islington, where, as a member of the large congregation who "sat under" the Rev. Henry Allon, I became acquainted with him. Among the institutions connected with this church was a choral society of considerable strength, conducted, but no more than nominally conducted, by the organist. The services of Gauntlett were not, at that time, available on week-days, and his place was taken by Josiah Pitman, organist of Lincoln's Inn Chapel, a singular character whom I was destined to know

very well in after years. On Sundays, "H. J. G." regularly put in an appearance, though not always at the right moment, and there were occasions when I dreaded that the honour of playing the service would be thrust upon me, I being known as a bit of an organist myself. On one of these occasions, a deacon was in the act of urging me towards the organ gallery, when, to my intense relief, the instrument began to speak at the instigation of more familiar fingers. This was a very narrow escape. I would sometimes sit with Gauntlett in his boxed-off and curtained official pen, but I am sure that he did not care for my presence. Equally certain am I that he had forgotten all about me when, years later, we became connected with a short-lived musical journal named *Concordia*, he as contributor, I as editor. Neither of us once mentioned Union Chapel, Islington, to the other.

In 1875 I wrote, for the *Musical Times*, an elaborate comparison of the original full score of "Elijah" and that now in use, showing the wonderful changes which the second thoughts of Mendelssohn constrained him to make in his master-work. The earlier score, supplied to me for this purpose, was a German MS., said to have been used by the organist at Birmingham when the oratorio was produced there in 1846. Dr Gauntlett having been the organist on the occasion, I wrote asking if he could verify the statement. In response came a characteristic

letter, touching various subjects. But the first paragraph alone concerns us here :—

“15 ST MARY ABBOTT’S TERRACE,  
30 November 1875

“DEAR SIR,—I have been trying to get to you to see the score you have written upon. The score I played from was a tall copy with a horrid running German handwriting, of which I could make nothing. Not a mark as to the use of the organ. When the rehearsal was over, Mendelssohn said to me: ‘You used the organ once where I did not intend, but it was good, and I shall keep it. And you omitted it where I intended to use it; but the effect was good and I shall not make it.’ But I must come and see the score for a particular reason.

*Mend  
c. in. 1875*

“Yrs. faithfully.

“H. J. GAUNTLETT”

The Doctor never came to see the score of “Elijah,” so to this day I cannot be sure whether it was used by Gauntlett at Birmingham or not. The presumption is that it was.

I have preserved another letter from Gauntlett for the reason that it has to do with the great gulf which separated the writer from J. W. Davison. The cause of that division I do not know, but there is reason to believe that it existed as far back as 1846. I have already said that the Doctor was organist at the production of “Elijah.” On this

hangs a tale to the effect that Davison, having to record the fact that Gauntlett played an organ solo between the parts, did so in terms of grotesque misinterpretation, saying, "Between the first and second parts a gentleman came and tuned the organ!" I do not vouch for the truth of this story, but, assuming its correctness, the bitter spirit which burns in the subjoined letter can hardly surprise anybody:—

"16 ST MARY ABBOTT'S TERRACE, KENSINGTON, W.,  
May 24, 1875

"DEAR MR BENNETT,—I have not read my *Concordia*, but saw the No. yesterday. I wrote 'unproved' armour, which has been truly 'improved' into 'improved armour,' and the sentence reads queer. But I see Mr Davison has re-written it (the article) for the *Times* this morning—an old habit of his. Forty years ago he worked up my notices in the *Sun* and the *Morning Post*. It is his pretty way, and so long as the poor wretch abuses me he is welcome to plunder me.

"Pray let me have three copies of the paper, my customary number, one to keep, one to lose, one to be stolen. But the post often fails. I will give you something on 'Lohengrin,' if I can get at it this week. The difficulty is at having to collate so much rubbish.—Yrs. faithfully.

"H. J. GAUNTLETT"

Gauntlett's deputy at the practices of the Union Chapel Choral Society was, in his way, a character.

A little man of quite insignificant appearance, he had a disproportionate self-assertion, and by that sin he fell—that is to say, lost his place in Lincoln's Inn Chapel. The story runs, as I heard it :—

Advent Sunday being near at hand, the Chaplain of the Honourable Society wished to have the hymn, "Lo, He comes, with clouds descending," sung to the old tune "Helmsley." Pitman disliked "Helmsley," and pointed out to the clergyman that the melody was originally a dance measure in use at Drury Lane Theatre. The reverend gentleman was not at all affected by the statement, thinking, probably, that after many years of use in the house of the Lord, time had worked off whatever there was of evil in its origin. Also, it may be, he agreed with the Rev. Rowland Hill, of Surrey Chapel fame, that not all pretty tunes should be left for the devil's advantage. Anyhow, Pitman's objection was overruled. Advent Sunday dawned, with "Lo, He comes," and "Helmsley," in the service list, and then was the moment for a supreme assertion of the organist's wilfulness as regards the secular origin and saltatory use of the tune. Pitman did not shrink. Valourously he started in what he deemed to be the original tempo for dancing purposes, and there was the organ capering and flourishing bars in advance of the choir, till the whole exercise ended in confusion. Shortly after this a new organist arose in Lincoln's Inn who knew not Josiah, and Josiah himself had his Sundays free.

When next the paths of "Josh" and myself drew near each other I found him installed in Covent Garden Theatre as maestro al piano (accompanist). He was of service in other ways, being concerned with the selection of the ladies of the ballet, doing some duty in the library, and, on at least one occasion, preparing the English text of an opera—the "Il Guarany" of Gomez, I think—which had been chosen for production. This achievement made for the delight of his friends, who freely quoted to him, with mock admiration, the lines—

"In this great shower,  
Let us hope that the mothers  
Will find some bower."

Pitman, in common with many musicians and actors of his day, not to mention critics, was a regular frequenter of the "Albion" Tavern, in the shadow of Old Drury, and might there have been found almost any evening, laughing at the sallies of Davison, even when, as often happened, they were directed against himself.

One of the best story-tellers among the musicians of my acquaintance was Sir Charles Halle, and one of the best of his stories (I heard him tell it) vividly illustrated the fact that what London Society seems to be it is not. I cannot convey, in writing, the smallest idea of the art with which Halle's tale was told; nor can I indicate the play

of feature, the varied intonation, and the changes of manner which made it almost a dramatic episode.

Halle, who was never weary of work, nor averse from taking wages for worthy labour, once engaged with a highly placed hostess to play a certain number of pianoforte solos at one of her receptions. Reaching the scene of operations in good time, he received a cordial welcome from the great lady, and mixed with the assembled guests, the silken rope that once divided artists from "Society" having long before been abolished, thanks to Spohr and other self-respecting foreigners. After some time the noise of tongues began to decline, and the watchful hostess thought the moment had come to turn on the pianist. "Will you oblige us, Sir Charles? Whatever you please. It is certain to be good." Halle sat down to the instrument, preluded, and started upon a well-known classic, half-a-dozen bars of which sufficed, as was doubtless hoped, to reanimate the talk. Though nobody listened, the performer went steadily on, and at the close of his effort received such thanks as a few perfunctory hand-claps can express. The hostess was most gracious. It was a charming work, she said, delightfully played. Presently, Halle was again called upon, and once more performed amid a babel of tongues. This time, the great lady expressed not only thanks but also a decided preference for the second piece as against the first. Halle bowed, and backed into the throng. All

this procedure was gone through a third time, and when the end came the hostess, in a kind of rapture, declared her wonder at the tact with which the pianist, beginning with the good, had gone on to the better, and finished with the best. Now did Halle take an amusing revenge: "But nobody listened," said he. "Sir Charles!" exclaimed the lady. "Not even your ladyship," Halle went on, "or you would have discovered that I played the same piece each time." Tableau!

As pianist Halle exemplified a school that was fast passing away—the school in which it was taught that the pianoforte rightly claimed to be a distinctive instrument, and not a sort of parlour orchestra. His playing therefore accommodated itself in all respects to the genius of the machine he controlled. It rarely sounded the notes of passion, but was all refinement, precision, and neatness. He struck no wrong notes, and dropped no right ones; nevertheless there were moments when one could have wished him less rigidly correct. He would have been more human, and, in consequence, more interesting. In rendering Schubert, however, he was unapproachable.

Halle's most important work was done, not as pianist, but in connection with the orchestra which, for so many years, called itself by his name. A complete conductor he was not; a more industrious and persevering concert giver I never knew; and he had ability great enough to satisfy the best class of amateurs at a time when few amateurs had



learned to be exigent. His most conspicuous weakness lay in accepting more work than he could get through at his best. He would even risk artistic failure in order to keep a contract. I had special occasion to note this at one of the Bristol Festivals, which were for many years conducted by him. The last evening of the programme was devoted to "Elijah," and the length of that work becomes formidable when the orchestra has to travel all night and begin rehearsal in a far distant town early next morning. This was the position in which Halle had placed himself and his merry men, but the worst has not been stated. Unless the performance of "Elijah" was got through at tip-top speed, the only available train could not be caught. Halle resolved to catch it, and made arrangements accordingly. He would take the oratorio at record pace; meanwhile all the baggage, musical and personal, would be placed in vans, these, with vehicles for members of the orchestra, being drawn up near Colston Hall. The last note struck, the members aforesaid would make a rush for the carriages; the larger instruments would be placed in the vans, and so on to the station at speed. Very neatly the operation was carried out, the Halle orchestra steaming away northward while yet poor "Elijah" lay gasping for breath. This was not wholesome, it certainly was not artistic, but if a man becomes a musical contractor he must face the consequences, whatever shape they take.

Another of Halle's happy-go-lucky achievements belongs to the year 1880, when he gave a performance of Berlioz's "Faust" in London. Some of the critics, seeing Strauss at the principal desk, concluded, without looking further, that Halle's Manchester band was present. There were some slips, and I must have pointed them out, since I have a letter from Halle to myself in which he says :—

"Our friend Chappell had thought the expense of bringing my band from Manchester might perhaps be avoided, and I did not venture to insist upon it; therefore the performance last Saturday has been given after one single rehearsal. Hence the few slips, which nobody can deplore more than I do, which did not occur at rehearsal, and came upon me in the most unexpected manner. I promise, however, that they shall not occur again."

Fancy undertaking to perform such a difficult work, then but little known, with a "scratch" orchestra, and after "one single rehearsal." But, in 1880, the time was not entirely passed when four-day festivals were entered upon with one day's general rehearsal!

I had very little personal intercourse with Walter Bache. We were in opposite camps, especially on the question of Liszt's claims to be a great composer—claims which he, a pupil of the master,

enforced with might and main, and I as sturdily denied. It was not in nature that I should be a *persona grata* with Bache, and, recognising the fact, I was content to remain on my own side of the great gulf which circumstances had fixed between us. But I had no quarrel with him. On the contrary, I saw much to admire in his unselfish devotion to his old master, and I was interested in the amiability of character with which he was generally credited. As already stated in this volume, Bache, on the occasion of Von Bülow's dinner to Davison, found it in his mind and heart to style me a fool. That epithet broke no bones. Doubtless I had done many foolish things, but I could take no manner of notice of a vulgarity. My human nature, however, enjoyed a certain measure of gratification when, some years later, I read a letter written by Bache to the late Mr Deichmann, forwarded to me for the purpose of an answer. It is a very interesting epistle, apart from any matter as between the writer and and myself; for that reason I insert it here:—

“58 GREAT RUSSELL ST., BEDFORD SQUARE, W.C.,  
Sept. 23

“DEAR DEICHMANN,—I am going to play the Schubert-Liszt Fantasia at my concert on Nov. 27, and sat down the other night to prepare a little analysis of it. But it struck me that the notice made by Mr Bennett for the Albert Hall Concerts is better than what I myself could do.

I therefore write to ask you whether you can get me permission to reprint it. (I don't at all know whether I ought to apply to Messrs Novello or to Mr Bennett himself.) If you can possibly manage this affair for me I should be very much obliged, and would only make two observations.

"I. I can't afford more than nominal terms (say one or two guineas); if more be required I must concoct a notice for myself.

"II. If Mr Bennett will give me the use of his analysis I should ask his permission to erase his preliminary remarks, in which he seems almost to apologise for Liszt's share in the work, or to add a little postscript of my own in which I should mention that I don't quite agree with him, and give my reasons for it. Of course it is a safe rule to say that we have no right to interfere with the works of great masters who are dead and gone, and nobody could possibly feel stronger on the point than I do. But the rule has its exceptions, and each exception must stand upon its own merits. Here we have a glorious work which is in danger of being forgotten, owing to the unpractical way in which the composer has expressed his thoughts. In my opinion, as also in Mr B.'s, Liszt has rescued a great work without the slightest interference with the composer's ideas. I am sure that if Schubert were living he would be the first to approve the change. Also if the thing be wrong of the critics to put the blame on Liszt's shoulders (they have surely given him enough to carry with-

out this addition) why not pitch into Mozart, Mendelssohn, and Schumann, who have made similar additions to Handel and Bach—additions which the composers would never have dreamed of, but which we nevertheless accept on their own merits? I could go on for half an hour on this subject, which is a very sore one with me, but I don't want to bore you. If you can manage this affair for me without much trouble to yourself I shall be much obliged. Ever yours, W. B."

Doubtless the affair was managed in the sense desired by W. B., he having full permission to deal with my analysis as seemed good to him.

I well remember the first appearance of Carl Rosa in this country. It took place at the Crystal Palace (March 10, 1866), under August Manns. The young Hamburger made no sensation as a solo violinist, and we next heard of him in America, where he was on tour with "Papa" Bateman, where, also, he met with the operatic soprano, Euphrosyne Parepa (widow of Captain de Wolfe Carvell), won her love, and married her (Feb. 1867). This union opened up a new career for the violinist, and nobody was surprised when he laid down the fiddle and took up the bâton, assuming also the position of an impresario. Rosa returned to England in 1871. Three years later his wife died, and all became dark in the firmament where she shone as a star.

Madame Parepa's death was not unexpected. Her health had been very unsatisfactory, and in 1871 it broke down for a time. Rosa then wrote to me :—

“ My wife continues to be so weak, that, after a consultation with her doctors, they have desired her to give up all engagements for the present, and have ordered her abroad for an entire change and rest to recruit. She was going to sing to-day at Windsor, at a State concert ; to-morrow at the Philharmonic, and make her début at the Opera the 1st of April. . . . It is, of course, a terrible disappointment for her to give up all these things after her name has been advertised, and after she had looked forward to her reappearance here with so much pleasure.”

Shortly after Madame Parepa's death, I received the following letter from her desolate husband :—

“ 10 WARWICK CRESCENT, MAIDA HILL, W.,  
1 *March*, '74

“ DEAR MR BENNETT,—I was sorry not to find you at home yesterday. I wanted to bring you (and I now send it) a small memento of my poor departed Euphrosyne. Will you wear it to her memory ? I would have called again to-day, but really feel very poorly indeed. Believe me, dear Mr Bennett,  
Very sincerely yours, CARL ROSA”

The small memento was a ring, which I have ever since worn in remembrance of an amiable woman and a gifted artist.

Rosa was not crushed by his heavy loss. In October 1875 we find him in the Princess's Theatre, at the head of a "Carl Rosa Grand Opera Company," and showing a spirit of enterprise which promised greater things to come. Among other works staged in the course of a short season was Cherubini's "The Water Carrier" ("Les deux Journées"), of which no English version, if indeed any at all, had been played in this country. Rosa was much encouraged by the reception of the Florentine master's work. In a letter to me he said :—

"Many, many thanks for your magnificent article on 'The Water Carrier.' I thought the musical part of the audience [here there is a word omitted], but I was not prepared to find the general public respond so well. We turned hundreds away last night, and could have gone on with it. The biggest house of the season, and the audience still more enthusiastic, if possible, than the first night! I think it is a healthy sign of the state of musical things. If I come back, I shall certainly try 'Fidelio.'"

Rosa did "come back" (1876), and duly tried "Fidelio," as became a man whose words were not lightly uttered. He also (1878) re-tried "The Lily of Killarney." Benedict's opera was then in favour,

and the composer had made some additions to it, of which Rosa availed himself. At the same time the "Lily" was running at Her Majesty's Theatre, to which circumstance Rosa refers in the subjoined letter :—

"ADELPHI THEATRE, 27 Feb. '78

"DEAR MR BENNETT,—If you have not been surfeited with the 'Lily' already, at Her Majesty's Opera, may I ask you the favour to come and hear it to-morrow at the House of Melodrama? I have a particular reason which I will explain afterwards. Perhaps you will be better pleased than with the 'Merry Wives' performances, at all events with Ludwig *versus* Marler. Sincerely yours,

"CARL ROSA"

Rosa's "particular reason" appears in another letter. Ludwig, of whose value the manager had formed a high idea, but not too high, if certain characters in the artist's repertory be chiefly considered, proved a notable acquisition.

Goring Thomas's "Nadeshda" was produced by this truly enterprising impresario at "Old Drury" in 1885. Rosa set much value, and built many hopes, upon this work. In a letter to me he said *à propos* :—

"I myself, as a musician, consider it a work of sterling merit—a work of which any country may be proud, and which should be received by the men who lead public opinion with joy."







JOSEPH MAAS IN "MANON"

The opera did not make an impression equal to Rosa's expectations, and he allowed his disappointment to appear in the letter from which I have just quoted:—

“I only too readily jumped at the conclusion that the work had made the same impression upon you as upon me. I am afraid it is an ungrateful task to produce English works, and I do not think I shall feel inclined to repeat the experiment much longer.”

I did not attach importance to the threat of giving up English opera. Rosa was a man of quick feeling. He was easily wounded, but his flesh soon healed, and he went on as before.

Another production of the season 1885 was an English version of Massenet's “Manon.” Responsibility for the translation and adaptation rested upon myself, and I found it a harassing burden, while of its value when completed I had grievous doubts. The composer, however, was satisfied, as Rosa informed me:—

“I think he (Massenet) was rather afraid of an English version, and all the more gratified at the pronounced success of it.”

The manager referred to the English version in another letter:—

“I see it stated that the performance will be exactly as in Paris. Don't you think it advisable

that it should be known that our version, with the consent of Massenet, differs in many respects? I hope that our version will be the adopted one in future. In fact, Pollini has already written me to send over our acting version, and he will do it."

In yet another letter he wrote :—

"If I am not mistaken, 'Nadeshda' will make the round of Europe."

Alas! managerial geese are often praised as swans.

Rosa was always on the look-out for a good operatic subject, and he repeatedly discussed with me the worth of his finds. Very few of them went beyond this stage. He was full of ideas for what I may describe as violent scenic effects. No doubt many readers can recall the land-slide which made sensation in Mr Corder's opera, and filled the theatre with dust. Rosa was, at one time, going to improve upon that by an avalanche of water—the bursting of a mill-dam or some equivalent catastrophe. I was to write the libretto, much as young Nicholas Nickleby provided a drama for the display of Mr Crummles's practicable pump, and with characteristic eagerness Rosa started on a model of the water-burst before anything else was done. I have a letter, dated May 23, 1888, in which he refers to this matter :—

"I saw the model, which was not satisfactory; but we have had a good go with the artist, and I

think it will come out all right, and be very effective, only the people must cross from front to back of stage, and the lookers-on be on the side of the public."

Here the letter shows a rough diagram—the water pouring down, with the hero and heroine safe on a rock in the middle of the torrent. The letter concludes :—

"Don't you think I am Herkomer No. 2?"

This remark is explained by the fact that the distinguished Professor was just then trying new stage effects in his little private theatre at Bushey.

Rosa's cataract never descended. I had no enthusiasm for the venture, and he began upon other projects.

I look back with much pleasure upon my friendship with the man who did so much for the English operatic stage. Rosa died far too soon, and his taking off was a loss to art in this country.

My recollections of grand Italian opera through a long series of years are connected with Benjamin Lumley, Frederick Gye, and James Henry Mapleson. To the personality of each of these men I must devote some remarks.

Of Lumley, as the flourishing impresario, the almost royal entertainer of Society at his villa on the Thames, and the controller of Jenny Lind at his opera-house in the Haymarket, I have few personal reminiscences. His season of splendour had closed when I began to follow the fortunes of

the impresario, and Lumley was struggling as best he could against a sea of troubles, which ultimately overwhelmed him, and sent him back to get what consolation was obtainable out of his original profession as a solicitor. Long after his fall, when living in a modest house at Kensington, he still loved to be hospitable to those whom he had known in more brilliant days. I find among my letters the following :—

“8 KENSINGTON CRESCENT, KENSINGTON WEST,  
14 May '73

“MY DEAR MR BENNETT,—Will you give me the pleasure of your company on Wednesday next, the 21st inst.? Dinner at 6.30. Don't allow any other engagement to stand in the way, or we shall be greatly disappointed. Yours very truly,

“B. LUMLEY”

I accepted the invitation, and found that John Oxenford and James W. Davison had also been invited. We were merely a *parti carré*, but fit though few. At the outset conversation lagged, for the dinner was good, and we were all hungry. Soon, however, the spirit of talk declared its power. Of the four at table, three were known conversationalists, Lumley, Oxenford, and Davison being always ready for the fray of tongues, while, as for myself, there never was a time when I could not take precedence as a listener. For a while the talkers buzzed like bees around a variety of attractive flowers, passing from theme to theme, and

finally settling upon, what does the reader suppose? —the existence and attributes of the Cosmic God. It was a case of Lumley and Oxenford as opposing champions, with Davison and myself as bottle-holders. The strife lasted long, for each combatant was a good man of his hands. Eventually Oxenford raised high that rasping voice of his, saying—

“Now you have got your Cosmic God in a ditch, what are you going to do with him?”

“Let him lie,” said Lumley; Davison struck in with a point of operatic history, and the smoke of battle cleared away.

I heard the rasping voice of the *Times* dramatic critic similarly uplifted a few years later in an hotel at Matlock. A boy had that evening been drowned in the river opposite the house, and the guests had sat down to dinner in a subdued mood. Presently the voice rang, or rasped through the room—

“Waiter, come here.”

I recognised the tones, and became all ears.

“Waiter,” said Oxenford, “now isn’t this a curious thing? A boy has been drowned, yet we’ve got no water to drink.”

The waiter fled, his hand before his mouth, and a shout of laughter ran round the tables, which were thenceforth cheerful enough.

Talking of talkers, let me tell how on an evening long ago I was one of a dinner party at a house in Brook Street where by trick of chance Charles Dickens and J. W. Davison sat nearly opposite

each other. The two men were not friends, nor were they enemies; in a personal sense they scarcely knew each other, but Davison was quite aware of the fact that Dickens could, when in the mood, talk brilliantly, even as himself. Scarcely had the serviettes been unfolded before the great musical critic "took the floor." What his subject was I have forgotten, but his wild and sometimes daring fancies held the company in humour to listen and laugh. Knowing what was intended, I watched Dickens curiously. The illustrious novelist, at first obviously surprised, seemed to detach himself from what was going on. With unmoved face and "laughless," he attacked the "course" before him, sometimes addressing a quiet word or two to the lady whom he had brought in. Davison, having secured an advantage, held on to it, which was easy enough, for Dickens ate his dinner and made no sign. He seemed, indeed, to drop into the sulks. So Davison carried off the honours, and the achievement mightily elated him.

I cannot say that the advantage of much personal intercourse with the manager who reigned at Covent Garden Theatre during many years fell to my lot. In point of fact, I met him once only, and the occasion was in no sense memorable. Gye held aloof, save professionally, from journalists and artists, and was never seen in the places they frequented; being, in that respect, very unlike his rival, and sometime partner, the genial "Jimmy"



Mapleson. But stories many were told of him, some of which made him out to be reserved and not greatly endowed with sentiment. It is as a keen man of business that we find him limned in a limerick by that master of limericks, Charles Lamb Kenney—

“There was an old manager, Gye,  
Who on the main chance kept an eye.  
If with him you would trade,  
A sure fortune was made,—  
Not yours, but that of old Gye !”

Jullien, the great Mons., testified to the same effect. He would say, and loved to say when men would listen, that which is here translated—

“I take Covent Garden and give what you call Promenade Concerts. Mr Gye, he come for rent on foot. Another season I make less money; Mr Gye, he come for rent in a cab. Figure to yourselves, my friends; I give another season; Mr Gye, he come for rent in a carriage; I make nothing! Name of a drummer!”

Poor Jullien was an irresponsible chatterer, and his tales were often those of a traveller, but, as Dean Swift wrote of the Earl of Suffolk's fool—

“His folly served to make folks laugh  
When wit and mirth were scarce.”

Frederick Gye was certainly a man of business, and, in business, enterprising. In 1854, he appears to have entertained the idea of running Promenade Concerts at Drury Lane Theatre, which was then under the control of E. T. Smith. On August 9,

he addressed a terse note to his brother manager on this matter :—

“ *August 9, 1854*

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I will take your theatre from Nov. 3 to Dec. 18, and pay you a rent of £80 per week. You must let me have the building for ten days previous, to make preparations; the rent not to commence until Nov. 3. These terms would tempt me to keep the R. I. O. closed. Very truly yours, FREDK. GYE

“ E. T. SMITH, Esq.,  
Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.”

Smith did not snap at the terms. He wanted better, and Gye yielded. Below is their agreement, the original of which, in Gye's handwriting, and signed by both parties, now belongs to me. It will be seen that Smith obtained £107 per week, for seven weeks.

“ Memorandum of Agreement between Mr E. T. Smith, and Frederick Gye, concerning the letting of Drury Lane Theatre—

“ Mr Smith agrees to let and F. Gye agrees to take the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, and appurtenances, from October 23 to December 11 inclusive, for the sum of seven hundred and fifty pounds, to be divided in equal weekly payments. Mr Smith undertakes not to let the theatre to be used for concerts or balls previous to F. Gye's occupation. This letting includes the refreshment

rooms as well as the box office; Mr Smith to have the privilege of writing six orders every evening; Mr Smith to have the use of his own sitting-room and, conjointly with Mr Gye, the painting and property rooms, but not so as to interfere with the placing of the scenery, &c., as has hitherto been done during the performance of promenade concerts. Mr Gye undertakes to deliver up the theatre in as good a state of repair as he receives it, fair wear and tear only allowed.

“ E. T. SMITH

“ FREDK. GYE

“ LONDON, *August* 19, 1854.”

Good man of business as Gye was, he on one occasion met with more than his match in Henry Jarrett. Jarrett, shrewd, calm, calculating, but ever ready, was Mapleson's "handy man" at Her Majesty's Theatre in 1867, and on the night of December 6 in that year he went to bed with nothing to disturb his equanimity. His sleep was soon broken by a vigorous shaking, and the voice of J. W. Davison (who had rooms in Jarrett's house) crying aloud, "Wake up. Her Majesty's has been burned down!" "Oh!" said Jarrett, without moving a muscle, "Go away, Jim, I want to think." His friend went away, whereupon the imperturbable one quietly rose, dressed, and slipped out of the house. Some time in the small hours he returned, went again to bed, and resumed his slumbers. Quite early that same morning, Frederick Gye,

whose theatre had not been burned down, being extremely anxious to take "Old Drury," put himself hurriedly in communication with the then lessee—Chatterton, I think. The answer he received was to the effect that Jarrett had come in the night and secured the prize. Certainly the worm was to the early bird in that instance. Let me add that I do not know these particulars of my own knowledge, but I tell the story as it was told to me by Jarrett himself, and he, save in the way of business, was no romancer.

Entering upon my work as a musical critic, it was not long before I made the acquaintance of Gye's rival in operatic management. From the first, I was attracted to Mapleson. No man was more genial than he, or of more engaging address, or better qualified by a lively invention to work up an ordinary incident into a good story. He wrote his own "Memoirs," and readers may safely be referred to the two amusing volumes in which they appear for a fuller knowledge than can be imparted here. But I have memories which are not shared by many, and these I now recall.

First, however, let me travel out of the record, and say that our mutual relations were not alone those of manager and critic. We were both officers in a regiment of Volunteers, and I, as a Captain, served under him as my commanding officer. Besides being senior Lieutenant-Colonel of the Tower Hamlets Rifle Brigade (now a battalion of

metropolitan "Terrors"), Mapleson was a Captain in the Honourable Artillery Company, the War Office not caring enough about citizen soldiers to deal seriously even with dual commands. In one respect Mapleson's duality was awkward for him. For some inscrutable reason, all Volunteer infantry, though armed with the same weapon as the infantry of the line, were required to adopt the "manual" of the regular rifle battalions, which carried a shorter rifle. The H.A.C., however, were exempt from this rule. It resulted that Captain Mapleson of the H.A.C., and Lieutenant-Colonel of the "Tower Hamlets," had two manual exercises on his mind. He not seldom mixed them up, with quite odd consequences to the decorum of his command. But he was equal to any emergency, and would often distract attention from a blunder by practically taking charge of No. 1 Company, on the flank of which he rode as the battalion moved in quarter column. Then his strong voice would ring out: "Up there on the right, No. 1"; "By the left"; "Look where you are going in the centre," and so on. This was pleasant for the Captain of No. 1—an excellent officer by the way—but our C.O. loved to hear his own voice; he revelled in the thunder and the shouting. It was especially good to see him riding through a London street at the head of his regiment, when, truly, he made a brave show, and knew it. Apropos, I remember an inspection parade marred by our Colonel's love of display. It was a blazing day, the men had

been some hours under arms, and all were hot and weary, longing for the "dismiss." Hardly had the inspecting officer ridden away before the Colonel announced that the battalion would march back to head-quarters, nearly two miles distant, and "dismiss" there. This was too much, as some low muttering made known. However, all went well for a time, though there were numerous applications for leave to "fall out," on one pretext or another, most of them being allowed by the sympathetic officers. Seeing these released ones joyfully making for the nearest places of refreshment, the men still in the ranks began to "fall out" of their own accord, and quickly the column melted away, leaving the officers to continue the march with a few steadfast souls to keep them in countenance. The situation was extremely comical, because Mapleson knew nothing of what was going on behind him. His face, when at length he did look round, was a study of mingled surprise, mortification, and anger. But he was prompt in action. Curtly ordering his major to dismiss the few who had not already dismissed themselves, and looking thunder-black at his company of officers, he rode off, leaving behind him a universal grin. He did not a second time try a march back to head-quarters after a fatiguing day.

One more story of the manager-colonel and I will return to my proper theme. Mapleson was somewhat of a favourite among the cocked-hats, thanks to his geniality, his stories, and, it may be, his ability to give away opera-boxes; wherefore

I was not much surprised to find him actually in command of a brigade at an Easter Monday sham-fight on the hills near Tring. Our regiment was present, and formed part of Mapleson's brigade, which held a second line, well in the rear of the fighting, during most of which we had the indignity of looking on from a commanding ridge. All went well for some time, and our brigadier was a grand figure as he rode down the line attended by his "galloper." Presently it was noticed that a big battalion of the enemy was moving obliquely on the flank of the right battalion (Tower Hamlets), to roll us up, as we thought, or do some other terrible thing. My company was far away from the threatened right, but soon got an order to double towards it in rear of the line, and form up at a right angle so as to present some sort of front to the advancing foe. I was afterwards told that the brigadier entered a loud protest against what he took to be the enemy's fell design. "This is most unfair!" he cried; "tell them to go back! Tell them to go back!" But, and here is the joke, the big battalion had no intention to attack our flank. It came late on the scene (by train from Manchester), and was calmly marching past us to the point in the enemy's line where it should have been half-an-hour before! The situation was very funny, and there must have been laughter among the cocked-hats, if they knew any better, which, perhaps, is doubtful.

I had often, in the "sixties," ridiculed the won-

derful document which, under the name of "prospectus," at that time heralded the operatic season both of Gye and Mapleson. It was a most mendacious production, which sought to win public favour by promises seldom kept, and by bluff and brag which deceived nobody. In view of the season of 1868, Mapleson suddenly appeared as a reformer of this misleading annual. It was time, for, a little earlier, the prospectus was reduced to absurdity by the issue, at Covent Garden, of an example containing the name of every opera, and every artist of any prominence, that had appeared at the R.I.O. since the starting of Gye's enterprise. Henry Jarrett saw how easy it would be to eclipse the rival house in this matter, and forthwith "Her Majesty's" prospectus came out with every opera and every conspicuous artist that had figured on the operatic side of the Haymarket for a hundred years or more. The town had its laugh at this foolish proceeding, and it was then, perhaps, that Mapleson perceived, what everybody else, Gye excepted, had long seen, that the game was not worth such an expensive candle. Mapleson's Theatre was burned in 1867, and he opened at Drury Lane the next year. In view of the next season (1869) he sent me the subjoined letter :—

"MACLEAN'S HOTEL,  
*Glasgow*

"MY DEAR BENNETT,—If not troubling you too much, will you kindly sketch out the matter for Prospectus and I will get it done here, and at once



send you the proofs. I know how valuable your time is, and, if you cannot conveniently undertake it, do not hesitate one moment to say so. Otherwise, I leave it entirely to your judgment. Latterly, the opera prospectuses have been spun out to such an enormous length, and the tempting casts (hardly ever carried out) displayed; operas promised, &c., &c.; singers of established reputation re-battered up, and others of no merit puff'd, that the least said will be the best, leaving the public to judge. I propose to do 'Il Talismano' for Nilsson, also 'Robert Devereux' for Titiens, 'Fra Diavolo' for Lodi, and an opera for Singelli, the other new soprano. I have, besides, engaged Paladini, a new tenor, De Reschi (*sic*), a new baritone, and Behrens and Perkins, new basses; although it need hardly be made special mention of, as the new names appear in the list. I might probably allude to my 15 years' experience in opera management or reputation, which will be a guarantee that notwithstanding the shortness of the prospectus, a deal will be done, as we open a month earlier than usual. However, I leave all to you. Time being very short, if you kindly give me your attention I should be indebted greatly.—

Yours ever, J. H. MAPLESON "

"P.S.—H.M. Opera will be carried on again for this season at T.R.D.L., which has proved well adapted for the temporary home. Indicate gently that we are not remaining at D. Lane for ever."

I sketched the prospectus as desired, wasting no words in it, and I was greatly amused at finding Mapleson posing as a prospectus reformer to me, who had repeatedly rated him for his sins thereanent. But that was so like him.

Stories of J. H. M. are crowded in my memory, but let the reader refer to his book, and get them at first hand. There is one, however, of which I am now the sole repository, and that may be told.

After one of the representations at Drury Lane, Davison proposed a visit to Mapleson behind the curtain. We found him in his room, where after some casual talk he said, "Look here, you boys: I am off to Brussels to-morrow (Sunday) morning, to interview a new light soprano. Come along, both of you, and give me your opinion upon her quality." "Very well," replied J. W. D., "I'm willing," and "So am I," said the present writer. Thus it was settled, and, next morning, we three met again at Charing Cross Station. We travelled to Dover in a reserved compartment, crossed the Channel in a reserved deck cabin, and in due course found ourselves speeding through France. Mapleson, so far, had received the salute of every official. He was evidently well known, and I was not surprised at the absence of formality in regard of tickets. But I felt curious as to the bearing of the French railway people, who are sometimes precise in exercising their functions. Presently, one of these appeared at the window with his formula, "Vos billets, s'il vous plait, Messieurs." Mapleson

looking imperially at the man, replied "Administration," hearing which the ticket-inspector murmured, "Pardon, monsieur!" and passed on. The magic word "Administration" took us to Brussels, and brought us back to Calais. Doubtless, Mapleson had three tickets in his pocket, ready for an emergency, but he wished to impress us, and he did.

Ever struggling and rarely succeeding as the years went on; always blowing bubbles which looked well, but burst quickly, and never willing to say die, Mapleson at last died. I attended his funeral in Highgate Cemetery, and found myself one of a very small company. A few of his old chorus people, faithful to the end, stood around the grave, but of all the artists who had served under him only Madame De Meric Lablache had the grace to put in an appearance. I cried "shame" at the time; I repeat the word now.

## CHAPTER XII

### MUSICAL CORRESPONDENCE

Letters from John Barnett, Mrs Mounsey Bartholomew, Richard Blagrove, W. Chappell, George Case, Giulia Grisi, Gustave Garcia, John Reynolds, Moriz Rosenthal, S. Arthur Chappell.

**H**AVING no further space for extended notices of musicians, and being unwilling to pass without a word all of those who remain, I have thought it well to represent some of them by one or more of their letters.

When the letter subjoined was written, John Barnett was seventy-five, and had fifteen years more to live. But old though he was, in his ashes lived his wonted fires. He still had strength to hope.

“COTTESWOLD, LECKHAMPTON HILL,  
near CHELTENHAM,  
*Decr. 18, 1877*

“DEAR SIR,—I unfortunately have not the pleasure of knowing you personally, and therefore hope you will pardon me for addressing you. I desired my publisher to send you (from me) a copy of a work published in 1834, and now reprinted in sonata form. I tried even at that remote period to do something for the advancement of English songs, and if your time will admit of your perusing



*John Barnet*



the preface you will see how that work was recd. I hope history will not repeat itself in this instance!

"Should you think it worth noticing, I need not say how grateful I should feel if you will introduce it to some of the journals you are connected with.

"I fear I am exigent, but I rely upon your wish to do every musician justice.—I am, dear Sir,  
yours faithfully,

JOHN BARNETT

"J. BENNETT, Esq."

"ELIJAH"

In the early eighties I made, for the *Musical Times*, an elaborate and almost exhaustive comparison of the original score of "Elijah," used at Birmingham in 1846, and that which superseded it in Exeter Hall a year later. Mrs Bartholomew, widow of Mendelssohn's English librettist, naturally took much interest in the process, and, as appears in the letter below, was anxious to discuss the subject. I do not remember meeting her for that purpose—probably I was too busy—and she seems to have forgotten that I visited her husband in the fifties to inspect the MS. of Mendelssohn's "Hear my Prayer," which was composed for Mr Bartholomew.

"58 BRUNSWICK PLACE, CITY ROAD, N.,

Febry. 1, 1883

"MY DEAR SIR,—As your remarks on the alterations in 'Elijah' are 'to be continued,' and as I possess 43 numbers of the Original P.F. score, I fancy that you might glean some information from them, and therefore propose that you

do me the pleasure of coming to compare notes. I am a very old-fashioned body, and dine at one—would you mind for once doing so? and coming here at 5 to tea: as the research may occupy some time, and we may have a chat on other musical matters also, I hope you will eat your bread and cheese with my sister and myself. Perhaps you would like to bring the copy from which you glean, and see the two at the same time, for I do not lend mine to anyone.

“I am not teaching either next Friday or the following Tuesday. Can you fix for either of these evenings?

“It is quite a journey here if you come from the City; a New Road Favourite, or Kent Road omnibus from the Bank, which comes up the City Road, will bring you to the end of this street, which runs into the City Road by Dawson's, a large draper's. Kindly let me have a reply immediately.

“I am told that there will not be special Lent services on the Fridays in Lent, so I name this as one of the times; should it be ordered by my Rector, I feel assured that you will forgive my altering the day; if you say the Tuesday after, no such cause could arise.—Yours faithfully,

“ANN S. MOUNSEY BARTHOLOMEW

“JOSEPH BENNETT, Esq.”

### THE CONCERTINA

Concertina players are combative persons whenever the status of their instrument is called in

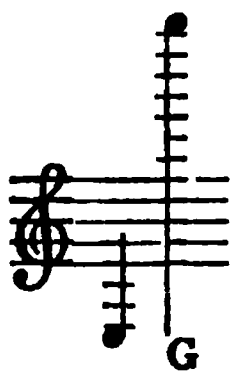


question. The good concertina, no doubt, suffers by some sort of connection with its relative in the street, and there is point in the resentment of the performer, whose pocket is offended no less than his pride. I have had militant letters from the late Mr Regondi, as well as from Mr Blagrove and others equally resolute if not quite so distinguished. But nothing seems to effect any change in the matter at issue. There is still the good concertina in the hands of an artist, and still the concertina of the street screeches amain. They must fight it out.

"70 UNION GROVE, CLAPHAM, S.W.,  
*May 17th, 1873*

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have been hoping for the pleasure of meeting you, that I might ask you whether you had written the criticism on M. Gounod's concert, in which was produced for the first time a Quartette of Silas' for Piano, Concertina, Viola and Violoncello. As that opportunity has not occurred, I feel it important to write you a few lines to ask you kindly to attend our concert on Wednesday next. The notice I enclose is, of course, calculated to do a great deal of harm to my instrument, and therefore to *me*. I feel sure you do not know the capabilities of the concertina, or you would not put it outside the boundary of classical instruments. Very important compositions have been written for it by Molique, G. Macfarren, Benedict, &c., &c., &c.

“The concertina having a compass of 4 octaves from scale, is capable of any amount of expression, has great power, and any Violin, Flute, or Oboe music can be played on it, besides which, certain music written for it cannot be played by any other instrument. It may be interesting to you to know that Molique has written 2 concertos for the concertina, with full orchestra, a sonata for concertina and Pianoforte, besides several small pieces. G. Macfarren has written a Quintette for Violin, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass and Concertina, besides several small pieces. E. Silas has composed 6 Trios for Piano, Concertina, and Viola; Quintette for Piano, Violin, Viola, 'cello, and Concertina, besides some small pieces, and one Quartette to which my letter refers.



“I think also some weight might be attached to the judgment of the late M. Regondi and myself, who have made the Concertina our study for many years past.

“Hoping to have the pleasure of seeing you on Wednesday, and with best compliments, I remain,  
yours faithfully,

RICHARD BLAGROVE”

### MEDDLING AND MUDDLING

In the letter below, the late Mr William Chappell hits out straight and hard at those who meddle and muddle on the pages of music. Fétis is held

up as a notorious offender, but he was not so bad as others who, admitting the general principle enforced by Mr Chappell, do wrong in particular cases. There are many such, unfortunately.

“*January 20, '75*

STAFFORD LODGE, OATLANDS PARK,  
WEYBRIDGE STATION

“DEAR SIR,—I know that I must be indebted to you for a most kind notice of my ‘History of Music’ in the *Pall Mall Gazette* and in the *Musical World*. I hope I may have the pleasure one day of being introduced to you, and of thanking you in person. Your admirable articles on music are before the world, and I have the opportunity of reading them, but there never was one more required than one of your latest—upon the liberties taken by public performers with authors’ compositions, and how the foolish public encourage such demonstrations. They seem to contend that each should mark a composition with his own stamp of individuality, instead of rendering the ideas of the author.

“I have sent you a copy of *Nature*, which includes a letter of mine on the Fétis question. So great an imposition is that man’s ‘History of Greek Music’ that I engage to give £5 to anyone who can find Greek authority for even the first two scales in his book.—Yours sincerely,

“WM. CHAPPELL

“JOSEPH BENNETT, Esq.”

## TROMBONES

I have always welcomed orchestral artists among the number of my correspondents. Not only are they, for the most part, excellent men, but, as experts in their particular line, they are men from whom it is possible, nay, easy, to learn much. Mr George Case has been good enough, on various occasions, to communicate with me on matters appertaining to his department in the great office of Music. One of his letters I now reproduce, as touching a subject with which Mr Case's name is intimately connected. Borrowing an expression once applied to Dr Jowett, I may say that what Mr Case does not know about trombones isn't knowledge.

"26 CLIFTON HILL, N.W.,

12 : 11 : 02

"DEAR SIR,—So much has been written about Handel's 'Messiah' that there seems little that can be added on the subject.

"Perhaps you will allow me to say something about the trombone parts of Handel's oratorios.

"First, it is necessary to remember that only in the last hundred years have the trombones come under the doubtful influence of the military band-masters. For centuries, up to 1800, the trombones were solely church instruments, and treated with great care and consideration; even in England they were not allowed to play in theatre orchestras, or even in concerts, without special leave.

“The absence of trombones from the MS. score of the ‘Messiah’ proves nothing, for they do not appear in the first printed score of the ‘Creation,’ or Mozart’s MS. score of ‘Don Giovanni,’ but in both cases on fly-leaves at the end, which might have easily been detached and lost.

“Henry VIII., well trained in music, had 10 trombones in his chapel-band; Queen Elizabeth, 6 trombones, from which time that number formed the complement up to about 1800, when the players were disbanded to provide a fund to form the present King’s Private Band.

“But the trombones were known by the title of the King’s Sacbuts, and in Handel’s time the six sacbuts of the Royal Chapel were the only trombones in England, no one but the King being allowed to use them.

“They would be used by Handel only in grand London performances of his oratorios, and it would be difficult or impossible to use them in any performances at a distance from the Court. Therefore the parts would not be ‘obbligato.’

“Also the names of these trombone players would not be found as such in orchestral lists in Handel’s time, for being thoroughly trained artists, they played string-parts when not playing trombone-parts in the Choruses.

“In the programme of the Handel Commemoration in 1784, at Westminster Abbey, the names of the 6 King’s sacbut-players are to be found both amongst the strings and as trombones.

"The only authentic trombone-parts by Handel are in the 2 Dead Marches in 'Samson' and 'Saul,' and the recently found parts of 'Israel in Egypt.'

"The *Musical Times* for November gives an interesting extract from a London Journal in 1741, announcing a benefit concert for Valentine Snow, Handel's trumpeter. It says, 'At the new theatre in the Haymarket this day will be performed a grand concert of Music by the best hands . . . likewise the Dead March in "Saul," to be performed with the sacbuts.' It may be of interest to note that at the special performance of the 'Messiah' this evening under Professor Prout, the trombone-parts will be played on the proper alto, tenor and bass instruments for the first time for many years; the alto-trombone having almost fallen into disuse through the ignorance of the modern conductor as to the proper balance of tone-colour in the orchestra.—Yours faithfully,      GEORGE CASE"

#### AN ALARMED LADY

A note of fear sounds through the subjoined letter of Grisi to her English manager. She has heard that he favours a proposal to get up a testimonial to herself, and she suspects that the purpose is to send her off in a blaze of benevolent glory, as an artist played out. Hence the pitiful anxiety of the letter.

"PARIS, *the 23 of December*

"MY DEAR SIR,—Mario has communicated to me your letter, and he told me that he does not

like what you say about the testimonial to me, and I must confess you I don't like it too. I certainly thank you for your kind idea but believe me, it is much better not to have done such a thing all the people will think that it is a humbug. The English public gave me for so many a year great testimonial of his affection for me, the English have been so good and kind to me, that for all my live I shall love the English and England as my own country and the idea of leaving for ever this beautyfull country makes me miserable and unhappy; for that reason my dear Sir, don't make any subscription *for me* this idea makes me quite miserable. My dear Sir, that I shall like, or that my own interets will oblige me to stay on the stage another year? If you do what you said, said in your letter to Mario, I could not of course go back to my dear England again.

“With kind regards from Mario and me, believe me always, yours truly,           GIULIA GRISI”

“*P.S.*—My dear Sir, I am sure, that the opera *il Ballo in Maschera* of Verdi's, will have an immense success it is a beautyfull opera and the music just to me very nice.”

### “THE VANISHING VOICE”

Under this heading, I wrote, in October 1902, certain paragraphs on the scarcity of good tenor voices. My words drew from Mr Gustave Garcia

an interesting letter, which I reproduce below. It speaks for itself.

"18/10/02

186 SUTHERLAND AVENUE,  
MAIDA VALE, W

"DEAR MR BENNETT,—In Tuesday's column on 'Music of the Day' (*Daily Telegraph*) I read with great interest your remarks about Tenor Voices. I quite indorse your statement that 'high barytones often take the place of tenors, and are classified as such by choral societies.' A guttural or throaty voice is the result of a sound pinched and strangled, which enables the singer to produce high notes although not without force and violence. The consequence being that after long rehearsals and performances the throat can no longer bear the strain. With the proper usual studies the voice would settle down within its proper range, and probably prove to be a barytone. Tenor voices, I mean real ones, are frequently throaty, especially when the language is guttural. With application and intelligent study this defect can be overcome. To obtain this result it is absolutely necessary that singing masters should acquire sufficient technical ability, solid knowledge, and personal experience both as singers and teachers, before teaching an art which requires years of study and practice. A fine vigorous voice is no doubt a rare article, it always has been, nor is it likely that matters will improve unless young voices be treated more judiciously. Manuel Garcia



often said that young singers ought not to study declamatory music until they had attained the age of twenty-five (probably grand opera). Fortunately for us we still cultivate in this country such masters as Haydn, Handel, Mendelssohn and others, whose oratorios, not mentioning other works, keep us well in hand as regards technique and also sustained and broad phrasing. On this basis, and this alone, can young voices become mature, and acquire the necessary endurance to cope with modern works. I have often heard Mme. Pauline Viardot say to her pupils 'spare your voice; remember it is not a donkey you can thrash.' Should the teaching regain its former standard, I have no doubt voices would improve, and probably 'The Tenor' would no longer be considered as the 'vanishing voice.'

"Apologising for thus encroaching on your valuable time, I remain, dear Mr Bennett, always sincerely,

GUSTAVE GARCIA"

### A WORD FOR JULLIEN

My old correspondent and friend, Mr John Reynolds, so long contra-bassist at the "Pops," here puts in an effective word for Mons. Jullien, at whom the ignorant were wont to laugh, and the "superior person" to sneer. Neither had the capacity to understand him, but, for all that, he did good service to music in England. I agree

with every word of Mr Reynolds, but it is too late to make amends.

"3 OAKLEY SQUARE, N.W., *Sep.* 22d, 1900

"JOSEPH BENNETT, Esq.

"SIR,—With reference to your notice of the Promenade Concert, Queen's Hall, in this day's issue, I beg to remind you that in days gone by a Beethoven programme at a Promenade Concert was deemed a bait likely to attract a large audience, and never was Covent Garden or Drury Lane more crammed than on a Beethoven night, when Jullien gave the concerts. I have no desire to appear in print, but I do not think that the great work of a man who was, I believe, the first manager and conductor to familiarise the public with classical orchestral works, should be forgotten. Moreover, I may say that I never heard finer performances of many classical Overtures and Symphonies than those directed by Jullien, and I have played them under all the great (?) conductors for over fifty years. Jullien, of course, was considered a charlatan by all those who did not, or would not, understand him; but the twenty or thirty classical works he had made a study of, no one I have known has ever made go so well.—With apologies, I am, yours sincerely,

JOHN REYNOLDS "

#### PHRASING—SOME EXAMPLES

During Mr Moriz Rosenthal's visits to this country he and I corresponded, at intervals, on

important musical points, as in the letter set out below. I have chosen his epistle on phrasing, because the subject is of very wide interest, and the writer's remarks are highly suggestive. Mr Rosenthal, I may add, is something more than a very great pianist. He is also a studious and thoughtful musician, who can give very good reasons for the faith that is in him.

"THE GRAND HOTEL, BRIGHTON

"DEAR SIR,—I really cannot tell you how happy your appreciation made me. After a long sickness, and very sorrowful time indeed afterwards, I performed the first time in London, and I am deeply touched that you agreed with my performances. I don't dare to thank you, but I surely ever will try to go the very narrow path of true and great art.

"You were the only one, dear Sir, who remarked the close study of my text, together with my arrival at individual conclusions. That the chief interest I take in musical reproductive matters lies in the correct phrasing I confess openly. You gave me the honour to ask of me an autograph for your magnificent collection. May I write 'exempli causa' a few touches of well known and very misunderstood works?

"The Sonata of Mozart is phrased in the theme commonly played as follows :—

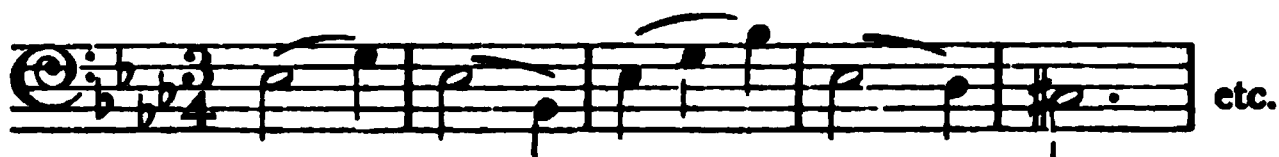


Now it is clear that the 'divine' theme sounds

as monotonous as possible. I hope to have caught the meaning of the master with the following phrasing:—



In the Eroica Symphonie the common phrasing is erroneous (and all great and praised conductors follow this way):—



This gives the idea of four E flats and a chromatic descending bass, not to C sharp, but to D flat. It sounds very commonplace. The true meaning is most assuredly:—



Now this C sharp opens a strange perspective in an unknown country, the 'pays du génie.'

"Also the Kreutzer Sonata is misunderstood of all violinists. They play always, and flatter them-



selves with the funny idea that they have caught the meaning of the immortal composer. But of

course the melody corresponds to the first two strokes, and goes as follows :—



Now the melodic content is



but not—



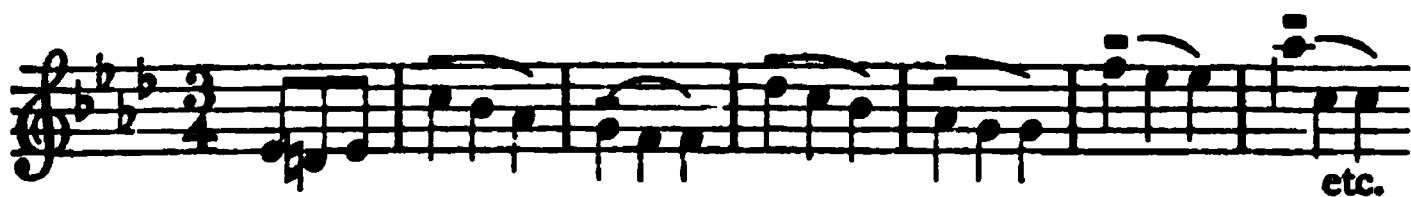
In the A flat Valse of Chopin they play



but of course it should be in this noble melody



In the 'Sehnsuchtswälzer' of Schubert is heard always the following reading :—



It is a pleasure to dance after this rhythm, but

of course it should be, and I am sure you will agree with me :—



But I am afraid to tire you with more examples.

“May I still say one word about the variations of Brahms’ (Paganini)? I asked the master, 15 years ago, which set of the two he wished me to play in public, the first or second? (Both together would give an anticlimax, as there are two long Finales.) He told me to make a choice from both, and I did so, and he agreed with my selection, hearing it 4 times in public, and very often in the Tonkünstlerverein. Allow me to state this, as I would not seem to take liberties with such a great master as Brahms.

“I am, dear Sir, alway, with the highest feelings of esteem and gratefulness, yours very truly,

“MORIZ ROSENTHAL

“BRIGHTON, 23 *March* '98.”

### DEATH OF THE “POPS”

Subjoined is a copy of a letter addressed to me by Arthur Chappell on July 15, 1901 :—

“DEAR MR BENNETT,—I have made up my mind to give a farewell concert in December (18 or 19), as after 42 years’ work, during which time I have directed 1532 musical entertainments, I think it is time to make my bow. Paderewski and a

number of other first-rate artists have promised me their support, and I will send you a list of their names as soon as I have their consent. I thought you would kindly mention my determination in your musical notes, and if you will tell me when they will appear I can, perhaps, send you the names of some of the artists who have already said 'Yes.'

"The Saturday Popular Concerts will be continued as hitherto under the management of Chappell & Co.—Believe me, yours very truly,

"S. ARTHUR CHAPPELL"

Just before the enterprise collapsed, Chappell asked me to call upon him, for which purpose I came up from the country, and learned that all was practically over. We had a long interview, and I learned much from it—learned, for example, that nothing is sacred to musical intriguers and partisans, any more than to a French Sapeur. But it is not worth while to revive these matters. Let the dead past bury its dead, and let them moulder together.

## CHAPTER XIII

### JOURNALS AND JOURNALISTS

Journals upon which I served (1865-1905)—A mistake at Glasgow—I accept the musical department of the *Daily Telegraph*—My colleagues in Peterborough Court—Special Reporter of distinguished funerals—Work in the Press Gallery of the House—Some stories—The *Musical World* and its editor, J. W. Davison—The Muttonians—I become Editor of *Concordia*; afterwards of the *Lute*—My colleagues on each paper—The Limerick in *Concordia*—Both journals are short-lived—I visit the United States—At Salt Lake City—A 7000 miles' tour—Death of J. W. Davison—Haunts of musical critics—The Edinburgh Castle, Strand—John the waiter as a character—Leman Blanchard's Ode to John—The Albion Tavern—William the waiter—Some of the frequenters—Sutherland Edwards—Henry Jarrett.

**B**ETWEEN April 1865, and September 1905, I served as musical critic upon the staff of the following journals :—

DAILIES.—*The Day, The Globe, Pall Mall Gazette, The Daily Telegraph.*

WEEKLIES.—*Sunday Times, Pictorial Times, Graphic.*

MUSICAL JOURNALS.—*Musical Standard, Musical World, Musical Times, Lute, Concordia.*

To the journals named below I was only an occasional contributor, my help being sometimes desired at festivals and on special occasions.

*Norwich Mercury, Leeds Mercury, Athenæum, Worcester Journal, Glasgow Herald.*



These names indicate a fairly strenuous life, and there were times when, drawing extravagantly upon my resources, I kept quite a sheaf of papers in hand. At one of the Norwich Festivals, for example, I supplied with reports and criticism the *Daily Telegraph*, *Norwich Mercury* (which liked "copy" by the page), *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Graphic*, *Pictorial Times*, and *Sunday Times*. For this heavy task all my "four o'clock in the morning courage" was necessary; four o'clock being the hour at which I sat again to my desk, after rising from it at midnight. I see now it was foolish to undertake so much, but I was in the prime of life, enthusiastic in the matter of my work, and proud of the position which I had in so short a time attained. Moreover, I had a ready pen, which, by the way, was sometimes more free than interested persons found pleasant. Let me recall an instance.

At one of the Glasgow Festivals—the first of the series, if I rightly remember—it was obvious that, though band and chorus were efficient, the choral music, or some of it, suffered from the shortcomings of a local conductor. I was in Glasgow, not as a critic, but as the guest of my friend, Thomas Stillie, an amateur of music, who, also, regularly wrote musical articles for the *Glasgow Herald*. He was a good man of his hands in that capacity, but mistrusted his power to deal satisfactorily with the heavy and varied programme of a great festival. In the end he begged me

to take the responsibility off his shoulders, where it was as oppressive a burden as ever was his pack to Bunyan's Pilgrim. 'Always ready for work, I assented, and when noticing the defects above referred to, impulsively said that they brought to mind the judgment passed by somebody on our army in the Crimea, namely, that it was "an army of lions led by asses." That was a remark in very bad taste, and to make matters worse, the discredit of having written it fell upon poor Stillie, whose distress was extreme; he dreading that his fellow merchants on 'Change would send him to Coventry. However, nothing untoward followed. But a memory still remains with me, and is not pleasant.

My connection with some of the journals before mentioned was brief. Both *The Day* and another, after struggling awhile to gain a footing, gave up the fight and disappeared. One of them certainly made an ungentlemanly exit. On a certain Sunday evening—how well I remember it—a messenger whom I had sent to the office with my "copy," brought it back. "The place was shut up," cried the lad; "I hammered the doors a long time, but nobody came, and when some men standing by told me that others had hammered before me, all for nothing, I started home." I felt this somewhat keenly: not for the sake of the money, though the regular receipt of four guineas per week from a morning paper was, as Sam Weller called the gift of a suit of clothes from Mr Pickwick, "a wery uncom-

mon circumstance indeed." My pain came from the feeling that I had received a set-back, having to put off my dignity as writer for a morning journal and appear in the more ordinary aspect of a weekly.

In March 1870, I was invited by the chief proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph* (Mr J. M. Levy) to accept the post of musical critic on that journal, in succession to the late Sir (at that time Mr) Campbell Clarke, he being then on the point of leaving London for Paris as representative of the paper in the French capital. The result of this change, four years later, was an engagement to serve the *Daily Telegraph* only, resigning all others. The papers given up were the *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Pictorial Times*, *Sunday Times*, and *Graphic*, I remaining, however, at liberty to contribute to musical journals, and accordingly the *Musical Times* and *Musical World* were retained by me.

My absorption by the great journal in Peterborough Court was the most decisive event of my career. In one very important sense it "settled" me, inasmuch as I held the post without a break from 1870 to 1906, all that time enjoying the happiest relations with my chief, and with the men who became my colleagues. Among these were Sir Edwin Arnold, Godfrey Turner, E. L. Blanchard, Clement Scott, and others, whom the anonymity of the press, then much insisted on, kept shrouded from public recognition. Of those named, Godfrey Turner had occasional relations with the musical department; in times of stress, for example, or

when other duties called me away. Turner was too experienced a press man not to avoid pitfalls when dealing with subjects lying outside his intimate acquaintance, but I was sometimes a little anxious on his account. One such occasion chanced in the autumn of 1883, when, instead of being at the Gloucester Festival, I was in Ireland, writing letters from that "Distressful Country." Securing a *Telegraph* at Limerick Station, a glance made known that Turner was doing the Gloucester work, and not quite sure of himself at moments, though avoiding mistakes with customary alertness, and never getting much out of his depth. I resolved to be in person at the next festival, and was fortunately recalled in time.

As may be inferred from what I have just said, my engagement with the *Daily Telegraph* made me available for other than musical work, and it was entirely to my liking that, from time to time, I had a pleasant change. I recall many delightful trips to "fresh woods and pastures new"—to the Spas of England; to historic or romantic spots in the Western counties; to the hills of Wales; to sections of our island coast-line on various occasions; to Volunteer reviews at Eastertide; to State pageants and the funerals of distinguished persons. But these varied engagements, those in Ireland only excepted, as being of paramount importance, were never permitted to interfere seriously with my work as musical critic. Mr dear old chief, Mr J. M. Levy, saw well to that; the musical and dramatic

parts of the paper being those in which he took a particular interest. Blanchard, Clement Scott and myself always knew that there was a benevolent eye upon us, which was as much a guardian as a monitor.

I have mentioned funerals as within the line of my activities. In the nature of the case these could not be agreeable engagements, but it may have been my own fault that I was employed upon them. The death of Theresa Tietjens in 1877 touched me deeply. She was a friend of mine, and I had admired her, not only for her artistic gifts, but also for her womanly qualities. On this account, and anxious that others should share my sympathies, I volunteered to write a report of the funeral. Into that report I put some of my best work, inspired by genuine regret, and so moved my chief that, for many years, nearly all the important funerals were recorded by the musical critic of the *Telegraph*. I may mention as examples, those of the Princess Mary, Duchess of Teck, the Duke of Cambridge, Mr John Ruskin, Sir G. A. Macfarren, Mr Gladstone, Mrs Gladstone, the Duke of Northumberland, Lord Leighton, John Bright, and Lord Randolph Churchill.

For some years, moreover, my duties extended to the Houses of Parliament, as descriptive reporter on special occasions. Twice I saw Queen Victoria seated on her throne in the House of Lords; once when Lord Beaconsfield, only just created a peer, and not having yet taken his seat, sprang a

“sensation” on the brilliant assembly by appearing in the Royal Procession, wearing his Earl’s robes, and carrying the Sword of State. That was a kind of effect which England’s versatile Premier well loved, but his face as he walked before the Queen might have been that of the Sphinx for all the expression it wore.

At the second “opening” which I was privileged to witness, the crown of Queen Victoria narrowly escaped tumbling to the ground. The ceremony having ended, the Queen rose from her seat, and the Prince of Wales stood with extended hand to guide his mother down the steps of the throne. But one of the long “weepers” usually worn at that time by the Royal widow caught in the carved work of the chair, and dragged Her Majesty’s head-dress, crown and all, out of its place. The emblem of sovereignty was just toppling over, when Princess Beatrice, with a quick movement, seized it, and soon put matters right again. The incident occupied but a few moments, and was probably unobserved by many present.

My experiences in the House of Commons were sometimes of a nature favourable to display on the part of a descriptive writer. Those were the days of Joseph Biggar and the Irish obstructives, and I did not miss the memorable occasion on which some thirty or forty gentlemen from the Isle of Saints, having refused either to vote on the question before the House, or to quit the chamber, were expelled *vi et armis*. Jointly and severally

these Irish members declined to move save by the application of superior force. It was a painful scene, but, the Irish being in it, droll incidents were not wanting as relief. One of the delinquents, a gallant gentleman (Major O'Gorman), who might have played Falstaff without "making up," caused much amusement. The removals were carried out one at a time, Mr Speaker calling each man's name from a list supplied by a clerk at the table, and when the First Commoner summoned Major O'Gorman to withdraw, a ripple of amusement ran along the green benches. The gallant officer had a corner seat next the gangway, where he was presently confronted by the Sergeant-at-Arms, or his Deputy, and invited to retire. The O'Gorman retire before one man! Nay, nay! That was not yielding to superior force. So he shook his head and remained in his seat. On this a second official reinforced the first, but still the massive Major smiled contempt upon the executive arm of the House. He did not budge. A third officer, a policeman, if I remember rightly, next took the field, but not even three to one daunted the Major. When, however, it became a case of four to one, as it promptly did, O'Gorman admitted superior force; descended to the "flure," where Smith O'Brien threatened to die, but didn't, and after a very polite bow to Mr Speaker, moved ponderously out of the House. Honourable members roared with delight not unmingled with sympathy, for the Major was a general favourite. But, oh!

to watch Mr Gladstone's face as the scene went on!

I apologise for having wandered outside of music in the last few paragraphs, and, hoping to be forgiven, regain the old road.

With regard to musical journals, it has already been stated that, for five or six years, I acted as sub-editor of the *Musical World*, under J. W. Davison, editor, and his brother, W. Duncan Davison, proprietor. In that capacity I succeeded Desmond Ryan the elder, who died in 1868, after occupying the post since 1846. If ever there existed a Bohemian journal of music, the *Musical World* was that one. Well knowing my editor, I was prepared for duties vaguely defined, and even intermittent; for a general absence of law and order, and a good deal of haphazard editing. I found this, and so much more that I sometimes wondered how the paper managed to come out at all. Fortunately Davison had a general reverence for printed matter which might serve as "copy" on an emergency. The scissors were wielded by him with a persistency and devotion worthy of a better cause, so that our room was perennially littered with the trophies of his industry, very few of which were readily available for lack of a clue to their precise whereabouts. I tried hard to reduce the chaos to some sort of order, and in large measure succeeded, even to the banishment of the Muttonians. The reader cries, "And who, or what, were the Muttonians?"







MR. AP MUTTON AND DR. SHOO

These, you must know, were personal figments of Davison's very quaint and curious intellect—puppets he used for the expression of ideas and sentiments which, through their very plastic individuality, he could represent in the most fantastic forms. Their number included characters purely fictitious, and also some which slightly veiled the form and features of his personal friends. Each puppet had a name, upon the coining of which my editor expended much ingenuity, sometimes with quite happy results. The ruling Muttonian, a tall person with a sheep's head and legs tapering to a point, stood for Davison himself, and was styled Mr Ap Mutton. Always spoken of with deep respect, and obeyed with trembling eagerness, Ap Mutton claimed the homage of awe and reverence after his "translation" to a rather vague though certainly higher sphere. He would, however, occasionally descend to the lower air, and there issue commands and reprimands to his successor, Dr Shoe, a little man represented as taking down the august words with Ap Mutton's abandoned quill, in so far, that is, as he could wield such a gigantic implement. Dr Shoe's council, so to speak, included Shaver Silver (H. Sutherland Edwards), Thaddeus Egg (myself), Drinkwater Hard (Clemow, an occasional correspondent of the *Musical World*), Flamborough Head (George Grove), and a few others having, like these, a flesh and blood backing. Davison himself was not content with one name or even

two names. He figured in the curious company not only as Ap Mutton and Shoe, but also as Dishley Peters, Abraham Sadoke Silent, and so on. These personages were the puppets which Davison took a queer delight in playing week by week. There were other characters quite imaginary, whose names were purely fantastic, such as : Dr Blidge, Dr Grief, Alderman Doublebody, Sir Caper O'Corby, Lavender Pitt, and Purple Powis. Many of these were invented by Davison in order that Charles Lyall, clever caricaturist no less than gifted comedian and singer, might fit them with "counterfeit presentments" to match. And very well Lyall did it, with infinite humour, and sometimes with subtle suggestion. The drawings were all published in the *Musical World*, to the puzzlement, if not the amazement, of its readers. Their accompanying letter-press was always decidedly cryptic and bewildering ; so answering the end of its existence.

Davison parted from his fantoccini with much reluctance. I urged many forcible reasons why they should forthwith have the curtain rung down upon them ; laying stress on the fact that his teachings through their acts and words were too obscure, and his witticisms too recondite for the ordinary mind. In response to this, on one occasion, he exclaimed : "Did I ever tell you what John Boosey, who once owned the *Musical World*, said to John Oxenford, *à propos* to certain articles from his pen ? Oxenford had contributed

to the journal a long series of papers in the manner, and with something of the language, of Rabelais. The scene was laid in the dining-room of the Edinburgh Castle, Strand, over which 'John the Waiter' presided; and there, amid appropriate Bohemian surroundings, the counterparts of the great Frenchman's characters poured forth their modern wit and wisdom. Well, John Boosey at last had reason to suspect that up-to-date Pantagruel was not sufficiently conspicuous in terms of cash on the credit side of the *M.W.* balance-sheet. Whereupon he wrote to Oxenford asking him to close the series. The contributor who derived as much pleasure from these papers as I do from my puppets, protested and reasoned, urging that they were much enjoyed in literary circles. 'Ah,' said Boosey, 'you very well know, Oxenford, that all our intellectual readers are on the free list!' That is the case now, and I am not going to consider the intellectual reader. If I can please myself, and make fools laugh at what they can't understand, why not?"

Nevertheless, there came a day when the Muttonians disappeared to a man, and readers marvelled to see the *M.W.*, as they expressed it, "once more in its right mind." I, then, had a free hand, but Davison never ceased to long for a glimpse of Ap Mutton, and a chat with Shoe.

On May 1, 1875, appeared the first number of a musical weekly, entitled *Concordia*. Its proprietors (Novello, Ewer & Co.) already owned a

monthly (*The Musical Times*), which, under the editorship of the late Henry C. Lunn, was enjoying what, for a journal of the kind, might be called a prosperous career. But the firm desired a more ambitious publication, and *Concordia*, a tall folio of twenty-four pages, with admirable print and excellent paper, seemed just the thing to attract attention, and secure respect for the enterprise of its founders. Asked to become the editor, I accepted the responsibility, not without trepidation, seeing that the scope of the new journal included, as secondary subjects, the Drama and Art. However, nothing venture, nothing win, and I ventured: with what result will appear presently.

My first business was to secure contributors, a task by no means difficult; the rate of pay for contributions being considered as, and being in fact, liberal. The first number contained signed articles by Charles K. Salaman, Edward Dannreuther, Ebenezer Prout, and others unsigned by writers of equal standing, who preferred to be anonymous. In the roll of contributors, as afterwards completed, appeared the names of William H. Cummings, Charles K. Salaman, Ebenezer Prout, Henry C. Lunn, H. Sutherland Edwards, Joseph Knight (Drama), Dr Maurice Davies, Dr H. J. Gauntlett, Henry Howe, W. H. Stone, Walter Thornbury, Clement Scott, and W. H. Statham (Art). With such a company as this I would proudly have marched twenty times through Coventry, and I must say for my helpers that

the merit of their contributions was splendidly sustained to the end. I must add that our relations were never affected by squabbles. In that respect the staff of *Concordia* was a "happy family," although our opinions on some musical topics of flaming interest were not always in accord.

With reference to opinions, let me say that the first production of "Lohengrin" in England (May 8, 1875) was recorded in the second number of *Concordia*, and commented on in a "leader" written by myself. At that time, and for years afterwards, I was very roundly abused by Wagnerian swash-bucklers in the Press as a virulent enemy of their chief; it being held, apparently, that he who offendeth in one Wagnerian thing is guilty of all; so raising their faith to the absolutism of a religious creed. Their vituperation did not trouble me, and, on the eve of "Lohengrin," I serenely wrote:—

"We hope judgment will be given solely on the merits of the work. There has been, in the Wagner controversy, enough of prejudice, injustice, and obstinacy; enough of that spirit of party which blinds the eyes to excellence on the one hand, and sanctions persistent wrong-doing on the other; enough of a desire to triumph over persons, rather than to weigh principles. Now is the time to change all this—to put Wagner himself out of mind, along with his turbulent retainers, and to

see whether in 'Lohengrin' we really have that which deserves to be the opera of the future. Should a conviction arise that the principles which it illustrates are true and right, no false pride should hinder its frank expression. England, converted to Wagner, will give him a higher place than that he holds elsewhere, because for so long he has had no place at all."

It seemed to me, at the time, that these words, which are certainly not intemperate, were followed by clashings of sword and buckler more furious than ever.

One other matter before I pass on. I should, perhaps, feel some shame at having introduced the "Limerick" to *Concordia*; but that now much abused form had not then been vulgarised by pushing tradesmen, and "bright" newspapers. Whether right or wrong, I did it, and now reproduce a few examples of the "Limerick" "as she was rote" thirty years ago:—

"There was a new actor, Salvini,  
Who, if Shakespeare had lived to have seen, he  
Would, be sure, have declared  
His laurels were shared  
By interpreters such as Salvini."

"There was an old actor called Sothern,  
With three parts to his back, and another'n  
Said to be on the way,  
Which will come out some day  
If Providence spares Mr Sothern



The following refers to Verdi's "Requiem" :—

"There was a new Requiem Mass,  
Which some, who for critics would pass,  
Say lacks of devotion,  
But o'er them and their notion  
Time will soon sing a Requiem Mass."

*Concordia*, the first number of which, as already stated, appeared on May-day, 1875, issued its final number on April 26, 1876, after a year of life. Its "last dying speech and confession" ran thus :—

*"The proprietors of 'Concordia' much regret that, having carried on their journal for a year without adequate encouragement from the musical and art-loving public, they have no alternative but to bring the enterprise to a close. With this number, therefore, the publication of 'Concordia' ceases."*

The farewell address was true, as far as it went, but it left much unsaid. I believe that *Concordia* would have succeeded had it been in the hands of proprietors less impatient, or, shall I say? better informed as to the slow progress of public appreciation in the case of a new journal.

Seven years later (1883) the music-firm of Patey & Willis, Great Marlborough Street, resolved to take a hand in musical journalism, and conceived the idea of a monthly paper (octavo) of twenty-four pages, including those devoted to a piece of new music. Again I was asked to become an editor, and once more I consented; not, however, with enthusiasm, but because John George Patey, and

his wife, the eminent contralto, were my personal friends. Some of my old *Concordia* staff rallied around their leader a second time, and the new staff, when complete, included Sutherland Edwards, W. Alexander Barrett, W. Beatty-Kingston, Desmond L. Ryan, and G. Mazzucato. I had hope of this venture, but could not feel sanguine, knowing that the editor of a musical journal owned by a trader in music almost necessarily works at a disadvantage. His proprietor expects the journal to assist the business, that being in most cases its *raison d'être*, and inevitably there are occasions when the poor editor has to put his journalistic pride in his pocket and sink to the level of puff. The *Lute* was pleasantly free from this form of distress, but troubles of a kindred nature occasionally arose. I remember an instance in particular :—

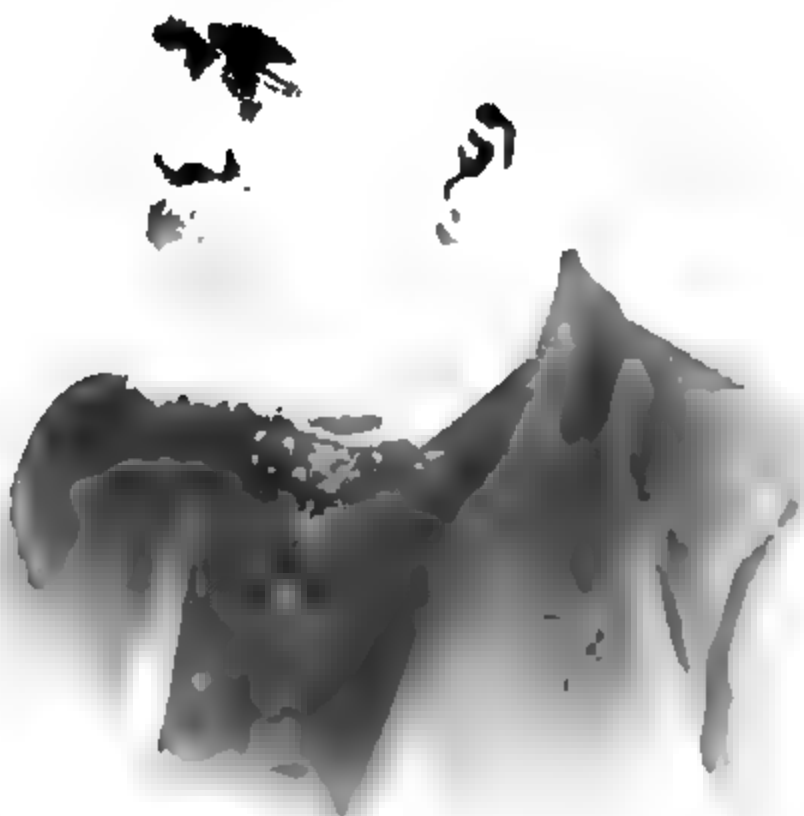
One day Patey wired me to this effect: "Want to see you. Important. Come down at once." I went down at once, imagining dire happenings on my way, among them that a writ for libel had been served on the firm by a super-sensitive and infuriate musician. Something pointing that way really had occurred, and I found my proprietor in a state of great agitation, if not of absolute terror. What does the reader suppose was his story? Simply that he had received a wire from Cusins peremptorily ordering him to remove his name from the list of subscribers to the *Lute*. Puzzled by this command, Patey had sought an interview

with Cusins, and, on being admitted to the presence, found the "Master of Musick to her Majesty the Queen" very far from being master of his own temper. Cusins, according to his visitor, was in a furious rage, white to the lips, and like St Paul on his way to Damascus, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter." And all for what? Only that in a *Lute* notice of a Philharmonic Concert, which Cusins conducted, it was stated that Sarasate had taken the last movement of Mendelssohn's violin Concerto at too great speed—so much too great that the wood-wind players were scarcely able to articulate their passages. That was all, and I laughed at poor Patey's fright. He by no means joined in my mirth. "What are you going to do about it?" inquired the alarmed publisher. My answer was: "Nothing. The criticism was fair and true. Given the same provocation, I should repeat it a hundred times." My reply did not soothe the fretting man, and perhaps my indifference as regards the offence added to his distress. Presently, however, the real cause of Patey's alarm came out. As Master of the Music at Court, Cusins practically had the engagement of artists for the State Concerts, and the husband of Madame Patey feared, not unreasonably, that Cusins might take his revenge by letting the lady severely alone in future. That would have been awkward, I fancy, for "John George," but, of course, nothing came of the affair. The passion of Cusins abated, and all things went on as before,

save that I had an additional reason for being shy of publishers' journals, especially when the publisher's wife was an artist.

My connection with the *Lute* did not long endure. In the course of 1884, the inevitable physical consequences of overwork became apparent, and my medical adviser warned me that it was necessary for me to take a sea voyage, and to sink my pen "certain fathoms deep" in the waters. Considering the number of interests in my charge this was extremely awkward, but all those with whom I had contracted obligations were most sympathetic, doing everything possible to render my holiday easy. The result was, that in October 1884, I sailed for New York, intending to make for the far West of Canada, and choose a temporary home in Winnipeg. Behind me, as *locum tenens*, I left my dear old friend, Lewis Thomas, who, having completed his career as a bass vocalist, was delighted to try his hand at musical criticism. I could not have found a safer man, and to his hands was confided my work on the *Daily Telegraph* and *Lute*. Very well he did it.

*L'homme propose*, etc., I never reached Winnipeg, and only penetrated half a mile into Canada. My American friends saw to that; enabling me to travel 7000 miles within the borders of the States, and pick up much information as to the condition of music in the vast area. Many interesting episodes marked the course of my long journey, but I now draw attention to one only.



LEWIS THOMAS



The plains east of the "Rockies" were a waste of snow; all the land west of them was a waste of mud. I turned off the Central Pacific main line at Ogden, *en route* to Salt Lake City, and found the headquarters of Mormonism a waste of mud also. The wide streets and roads were wellnigh impassable, and it seemed to be nobody's business to set them right again. Nevertheless I ventured abroad on the morning after my arrival, coming presently to a stand in one of the principal thoroughfares at sight of a music-shop. Over the door was a familiar Scottish name, which I looked upon as sufficient encouragement to walk in. On entering I found no one to receive me, but on the counter lay an old friend and familiar in the shape of a copy of the London *Musical Times*. I took it up, knowing that among its contents was an article from my pen, and just then a young man confronted me from behind the counter. To him I presented the *M.T.*, with my finger under my own name, saying, "Allow me to introduce myself as the writer of this article." A flush of surprise sprang to his face, his hand shot out over the counter, and he exclaimed: "For years I have read your writings in that journal, always wishing that I could see you, and now here you are!"

I had a good friend in my Scotch music-seller while I stayed in the City of the Saints. The organ in the Mormon Tabernacle was, at that time, in the repairing hands of its builder, a Swedish convert to the faith as it is in Joseph

Smith, but only a small part of the great machine was out of gear, and I found it thoroughly up to the date of 1884. The Swede told me that all the expert work in the instrument had been done by himself; that he had laboured at his task for years, and that the prepared material, such as the pipes, had been carried by mules 1000 miles across the plains and through the passes of the mountains that form such a splendid background to the city as one looks eastward up the straight and wide avenues.

They make much music for themselves in Salt Lake City, and the divine art enters largely into the services of the Mormon Tabernacle. At one end of that remarkable edifice stands the orchestra, much like that in Leeds Town Hall, but having the space in front occupied by a platform sloping towards the congregation, filled with chairs for the dignitaries of the Church, and crowned by a rostrum for the President, who, in 1884, was a Mr Taylor, a man not unfitted by his appearance to pose as a Methodist lay preacher. The wings of the orchestra were occupied by a choir of some 350 voices, mostly Welsh, as far as I could judge, and between these wings a fairly complete, if not very numerous orchestra had place, the great organ towering above all. The anthems were very effectively given by these Levites of the faith.

I returned to England in February 1885, and resumed my work, with Lewis Thomas as my



assistant on the *Telegraph*, and afterwards as my successor in the editorship of the *Lute*. A few weeks later, and when I was on the point of visiting him at Margate, my old and faithful friend, James William Davison, passed to his rest. Very shortly before leaving for America, and in company with Dr A. C. Mackenzie, I went down to Margate to say "Farewell," and found him in fair health, and showing much of his old vivacity and love of fun. But this was not to endure. I was informed by his brother, Duncan, who has since followed him, that his health began to run down with the close of the year. But he fought the last enemy bravely. What little remained for him to do was done, and the great critic died in harness. On the last day of his life, poor Davison left his bed to correct a proof of one of the Monday Popular Concert programme-books, which he edited to the end. This done, he lay down again. A few hours later came collapse and death. Among those who, with me, attended his remains to the grave, were many conspicuous in his beloved art. Some of these have since rejoined their ancient comrade and friend.

I cannot end this chapter without notice of the haunts of musical journalists in the mid-Victorian days. At that time certain houses in London of the "public" order served the purpose of the coffee-taverns which flourished when "glorious John" laid down the law in arts, letters, and things in general. They were fitted with the cramped com-

partments sketched by Cruickshank and described by Dickens ; their equipment also including waiters who were invariably called by their Christian names, and in appearance and professional characteristics might have stood for the drawers and tapsters of an earlier day. The manners of those who frequented these places were free, but rarely offensive. Though by no means "fed upon chaff," as, according to the Lucifer of the "Golden Legend," were certain Italian pilgrims, they bestowed much of that article upon each other, and rarely dropped into serious talk from the height of Bohemian gaiety. I saw a great deal of these places of resort before they disappeared as clubs multiplied and luxurious habits encroached upon the simple life.

Two of them I am able vividly to recall, one being the "Edinburgh Castle," close to the Church of St Mary, in the Strand. I mean, of course, the old "public" so called, which I am told has disappeared to make room for a glorified and possibly less genial successor. This "Edinburgh Castle" had the front of an ordinary "pub.," but if you refused the company in the "bar," made your way to the end of a passage leading to back regions, and pushed open a confronting door, the strident, rasping voice of John Oxenford, dramatic critic of the *Times*, might have assailed your ears. It is possible that you might have seen in the boxes round the room, besides Oxenford, Shirley Brooks, Douglas Jerrold, J. W. Davison, Joseph Knight (though he more affected the Arundel Club, not

far distant) and Mark Lemon ; not to mention a stray actor or two from the adjacent theatre-land. If your visit happened on a Sunday, then would you see some of the Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal and singing-men of the Temple, filling up not only their stomachs but the time between "services." There would be in such a case, dear old Lewis Thomas, with his Jovian head, bushy eyebrows and hearty laugh, Wynne, Cummings, and many others whose names I do not give for fear of error, into which, according to the Latin proverb, it is natural for man to fall. Certainly would you see John the Waiter, whom his patrons accounted a character of his kind. He was a little man of smoky appearance, the natural result of living in an atmosphere of smoke, and of very considerable reticence, which may be attributed, perhaps, to an ever present necessity of answering the bell, charging his memory with orders and doing sums in mental addition, to say nothing of giving change which should include a small piece of silver. John was that noblest work of God, an honest man. His reckoning did not proceed in this way : "Chop, Sir, yes, Sir, tenpence ; vegetables, fourpence, ten and four are fourteen, yes, Sir, one and four," and so on, counting always tenpence as a shilling, as the manner of some others was. Nor did he make mistakes in his change. He collected no half-franc pieces. Oxenford made great play with John in some Rabelaisian contributions, already mentioned in these pages as appearing in the *Musical World*,

and there was Homeric laughter in the smoke-dried little room at the "Edinburgh Castle" when Oxenford put into the mouth of the smoke-dried little waiter sentiments and expressions which never could have got within a thousand miles of his brain and tongue. Poor old John! He rests now from arithmetical exercises, and having passed the great change, has nothing more to do with lesser concerns. Edward Leman Blanchard wrote what may now very well pass as John's epitaph. It is the last verse of a Birthday Ode "given at our Castle of Edinburgh, August 28, 1875."

"Happy are they who in twenty-five years  
 Find a record no worse than with John appears,  
 Of a wish to do well, and an effort to try,  
 For more than the fourth of a century.  
 Ever with readiness, ever with zeal,  
 Helping the hungry, and bringing the meal,  
 Night and Day, Day and Night,  
 Soothing the wants of the appetite,  
 And giving the change, which is always right.  
 Oh, may we all, when our reckoning comes  
 On the top of the table so balance our thumbs,  
 And add the items all gone before  
 Into a total as safe and sure,  
 Ready to say,  
 In John's own way,  
 Thank you, sir, much obliged, thanks!  
 Good day."

The "Albion Tavern," my second example of the modern coffee and chop house, stands where it did in the "sixties," in the very shadow of Drury Lane Theatre, and abutting on Crown Court, where there is, or was, a Presbyterian Chapel

famous as the scene of many prophesyings during the pastorate of the Rev. Dr Cumming. The tavern has much changed, and is now a branch of the business of Spiers and Pond, Limited. When I frequented the house, it was "run" by a person whom his customers hardly ever saw. Cooper, I think, was his name, and Rumour had it that Mr Cooper lived somewhere away in the country. At any rate, the man with whom we had to deal was "William," head waiter and virtual manager. A spacious room shaped like the letter L was that to which nearly all customers made their way, for though a small bar enclosed one corner, the proprietor did not encourage casual drinking, and it served mainly for the custom of the coffee-room. This apartment, divided off by the usual boxes, was well-furnished in all respects, being, in fact, a cheerful and comfortable place of resort.

The chief characteristic of the "Albion" became noticeable only in the evening—before, during, and after the performances at the neighbouring theatres. At such times, but more particularly when the green curtain had been rung down, the boxes would find plenty of occupants, actors and lovers of actors, musical and dramatic critics and their hangers-on, members of the Covent Garden orchestra, and the congeners of all these, various in kind. It was to be observed that music and drama, represented by these persons, did not more than slightly intermix. As by instinct, the members of each class kept together; the musicians

and their critics affecting the boxes along the base of the L, while the actors and their friends—much the more numerous party—preferred those which lined the walls of the letter's perpendicular. Music was perhaps more favoured than drama in having as its Sir Oracle so distinguished a viveur as J. W. Davison. During the opera season the critic of the *Times* rarely failed to put in an appearance, or to draw around him a little throng of admirers. If it was the first night of a new opera at Covent Garden, all the critics would seek first the quiet and seclusion of a sombre apartment near at hand, there to write their preliminary notice, or, as sometimes happened when minds were made up, their final verdict upon the work submitted. This done, the symposium began in the coffee-room.

As already stated, Davison had a personal following, and very odd persons some of them were. Of "Josh" Pitman, the little organist of Lincoln's Inn, and *maestro al piano* at the Royal Italian Opera, I have already spoken, but may now add that he was generally seen behind a steaming glass of improvised punch, strongly flavoured with lemon, and giving audible assurance of his presence through the medium of a short barking laugh, to emit which with impressiveness he would wrinkle his face all over. This laugh was usually his main contribution to the spirit of the occasion. He was, however, a late sitter, and had a willing ear, which made him precious to the talkers. A more mysterious *habitué*

of the musical boxes was a man whom we knew as Turk, and, by the way, that was about all which some of us, including myself, did know. He was a rotund convive, carrying into middle age a full face with the smooth skin and fresh complexion of a boy. He also listened excellently well, and said nothing ; being content to beam impartially upon the talkers through gold-rimmed glasses, and express his satisfaction by silent laughter, together with a tremulous action of the body, due, perhaps, to the exertion of restraining his mirth within voiceless bounds. If my recollection be true on the point, Turk was not a late bird. He would silently steal away at what was, for the "Albion," a comparatively early hour, but whither he went none knew.

Barrable, a Regent Street photographer, was a frequent member of the Davison circle, and might often have been seen in the great critic's box at the opera. By no means a silent member, he was useful as an instigator of "alarums and excursions" when some bore had possession of the "house." I recall, likewise, Sutherland Edwards, whose fine vein of ironic humour none refused to welcome. He it was who informed readers of the *Pall Mall Gazette* that the Musical Union, a concert enterprise founded and conducted by John Ella, possessed a library to which subscribers "had the privilege of contributing," and who explained his absence from the performance of Costa's "Naaman" at the Norwich Festival of 1867 by saying that as he did not hear the oratorio in London, he thought

it would be invidious if he listened to it in the capital of East Anglia.

Henry Jarrett must not be forgotten here. He would frequently look in at the "Albion" when artists for whom he acted as agent were singing at Drury Lane or Covent Garden. In earlier years Jarrett had been an orchestral cornist, and an acknowledged expert on his beautiful instrument. He has told me how he obtained an engagement in the band of the Bath Theatre, which band also served the theatre at Bristol, playing on alternate nights in each city. Being quite a lad at the time, and receiving small pay, it was Jarrett's custom to walk the miles between the theatres, invariably starting for Bath at the close of the Bristol performance, heedless of darkness, wind and weather, and preferring the canal tow-path to the turnpike road. Eventually, of course, he removed to London, where his efficiency caused him to be much in request. A shrewd, observant man, he had no difficulty in seeing that there were posts connected with music in which more could be earned than by blowing into a horn. So he became Mapleson's "man of affairs" at "Her Majesty's" Theatre, where his services were invaluable, especially on nights when the ghost was expected to walk. He acted, further, as agent for a succession of eminent operatic artists—for Faure, Santley, Maas, Christine Nilsson, and many others, finally going over to the dramatic side to guard the interests of Sarah Bernhardt, in whose service he died, while on tour



in South America. In the autobiography of the famous actress, Jarrett figures largely as a man of infinite resource; always imperturbable, ever a superb tactician in the merry war of dramatic interests. He had some peculiar tastes, being, for instance, a lover of snakes, which he permitted to nestle in his bosom, even at his own dinner-table, where their writhings excited mingled feelings among the guests.

From several letters addressed by him to me I select one in which some well-known names are mentioned:—

“HOTEL DE FRANCE,  
FAUX BONNES, BASSES PYRÉNÉES,  
*Sept.* 13

“DEAR BENNETT,—M. Massenet has composed a Scena, ‘Apollo’s Invocation,’ with violin and organ obbligato, and full orchestra, expressly for Maas to sing at the approaching Norwich Festival. If you should have occasion to make mention of it, and will do so, I should feel much obliged.

“I have been here for several weeks, to take the waters, and, having taken enough of them—they can be very disagreeable sometimes—I shall leave here, &c., &c.—Yours very truly,

“H. JARRETT”

Time probably, space certainly, fail me to tell of all the musical and quasi-musical frequenters of the old “Albion,” and here I choose to draw the line. But one characteristic of the place I may not leave

unnoticed—it was difficult for William to persuade his patrons to go home.

There was a regulation hour for closing in those days as there is now, but nobody heeded it; whereas, at the present time it is almost as much as a publican's licence is worth to draw a glass of ale after the hour has struck. I have often wondered why the police were so lenient in their treatment of the "Albion," and as often I have complacently imagined that the character of the guests, and the exigencies of the calling to which so many of them were devoted, accounted for the special favour. Be that as it may, the authorities were satisfied if William closed the doors when "the iron tongue of midnight had tolled twelve," and if no one was admitted later those already within might stay, though by no means encouraged so to do by poor William.

Mr Pauncefote (that was his name, I think) was an excellent specimen of a genial head waiter, and, having a persuasive tongue, largely trusted to it as a means of influencing his guests. At 12.30 A.M. he would make a round of the boxes in a business mood. "Time is up, gentlemen, if you please." The gentlemen, as a rule, did not please, and the clock would creep on to the smallest of small hours, by which time the lights above the unoccupied boxes were turned off. At 1.30, William would start on another round but sounding now a note of entreaty: "Gentlemen, gentlemen, if you please! we want to close the bar." No immediate effect

being produced, all the lights in the room were reduced to half power ; this failing, William would make a third round, now in the imperative mood : " Very sorry, gentlemen, but you must go." Then the symposium ended ; sometimes, as I can testify, at 4 A.M., when, in summer, the sun had risen, and the sparrows in Covent Garden chirped briskly.

But there came a time when, on scenes of this kind, the curtain finally fell. One night, William informed us, with exultation which he could not conceal, that the police insisted upon all guests quitting the premises at midnight, and their fiat had to be obeyed. I firmly believe that this was a blow to the " Albion," which no longer could allow its patrons one of the most important privileges of a club. The old habitués saw " Ichabod " written over the erstwhile generous portals. The glory had indeed departed.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### OPERA AND OPERATIC PEOPLE

Gye and Mapleson in alliance—A great surprise—George Wood, of Regent Street, announces a season at Drury Lane—Jarrett at his right hand—Other operatic enterprises—Italian Opera "Buffo" at Lyceum—Mapleson's managerial policy adopted by Wood—Christine Nilsson and Wood's company—Production at Drury Lane of Wagner's "Der Fliegende Holländer"—Its effect—Gye-Mapleson alliance and Wood's enterprise break down—Mapleson starts again at Drury Lane—Gye re-opens Covent Garden—English Opera at the Gaiety—National Opera at St James's—Ciampi and the *Daily Telegraph*—Albani's début—Campanini's great success—and subsequent misfortune—Operatic reform—"Biorn"—Amusing circumstances—Albani's progress—Nilsson as Marguerite—Effect of her American tour—Sensitive artists—"Il Rinnegato" and amateur composers—Rubinstein and "Il Demonio"—Wagnerian opera at Covent Garden—The "Nibelungen Ring" at Her Majesty's—Recollections of Bayreuth—Verdi's "Otello" at Milan.

IN 1865, when my more intimate observation of the lyric drama and its stage began, J. H. Mapleson was running Her Majesty's Theatre, on the strength of such experience as he had gained under E. T. Smith, and Frederick Gye stood at the helm of the Covent Garden Theatre, then known as the Royal Italian Opera. Between 1865 and 1870, several events more or less important occurred at the first-named house, among them a very laudable effort to popularise Gluck in London ;

the first appearance of Christine Nilsson in England, the début of Ilma di Murska, and the fire, which in 1867, destroyed all but the exterior walls of the famous old house. Some of these events have already been touched upon, and the reader need not again be told how Gye's offer to take Drury Lane on the morning after the fire was defeated by Henry Jarrett in the small hours of the night. Let me begin, then, with the singular and surprising combination of Gye and Mapleson for the season of 1870, at Covent Garden. When the news of this amazing alliance spread about London, it might have been declared that the metropolis "held its breath for a time." The stroke seemed so unnecessary on the part of Gye, who was then as well equipped to run alone as ever he was, while, as for Mapleson, he must have known that his old opponent's vitality was itself a menace to the weaker partner. Jarrett warned him against the alliance, but Mapleson was not to be turned away; and, indeed, there is something to be said for his determination. For operatic purposes Drury Lane was not "Her Majesty's Theatre," Mapleson had not been doing good business there, and a partnership with Gye, he may have thought, would, besides conferring a certain status, remove from his shoulders a heavy burden of care.

It is not unlikely that Gye took to Mapleson for the purpose of displacing Jarrett, whose prowess in the field of strife he had reason to remember. If so, the manager of Covent Garden had made a

short estimate of Jarrett's capacity. For what did Mapleson's discarded business-manager do?

At that time Regent Street could boast a man of mark in George Wood, managing-director of the old musical firm of Cramer & Co. Wood was a Scot who, like many more of the same race, had descended upon London from the heights of Edinburgh, and found the change, though a little troublesome at times, not entirely uncongenial. The self-exiled Scot looked what he certainly was—a character. Tall and portly, well-dressed, an excellent story-teller with a pungent dialect, and endowed with many of the points that make for popularity, Wood was pretty sure of his position, stand where he might, unless on or near the stage; and there, as we all shrewdly suspect, nothing is certain. Wood, some years before 1870, had accepted a dramatic or operatic risk, with Jarrett as his business man, and failed, under circumstances which sundered the parties, till the situation caused by the Gye-Mapleson alliance brought them together again. After due debate a campaign was agreed upon, with Wood as commander-in-chief, and Jarrett as chief of staff; Drury Lane Theatre was secured, with Mapleson's old conductor, Arditi, as chef d'orchestre; and the rest to be as Fate decreed or permitted. So double opera reappeared; Gye was confounded, and Mapleson amazed.

There were other operatic enterprises in London at this time, one being an Italian Opera Buffa

Company, which was first in the field, opening at the Lyceum on January 2nd; Tito Mattei acting as conductor. Another, made up of English artists, appeared at the Gaiety under John Hollingshead, mainly, as it seemed, for the display of Charles Santley in tenor parts more or less transposed; with him being Florence Lancia, Charles Lyall, Aynsley Cook, and a fair company. The public, therefore, had four courses open before them, and the risk of the managerial quartet was one for serious consideration.

I have already mentioned Mapleson's exploitation of Gluck at Her Majesty's Theatre in the years immediately before the fire. With that policy Jarrett was associated, as was J. W. Davison, who occupied rooms in Jarrett's house, and was available as an outside adviser. The departure of Mapleson and the entry of Wood did not affect the policy of presenting unfamiliar works, which was continued by the production of Weber's "Abu Hassan," Mozart's "L'Oca del Cairo" (each a confused example, straightened out by another hand), and Wagner's "Der Fliegende Holländer," the first of the composer's operas to be heard in this country. These won for Wood the sympathies of the cognoscenti, many of whom, I fear, were on the free list. Financial success could be gained only by adequate performance of stock operas and the co-operation of gifted artists.

Of performers worthy to be described as gifted, Wood had several of the company lately at "Her

Majesty's," these preferring to remain with their agent, Jarrett. At their head stood Christine Nilsson, Tietjens having followed Mapleson to Covent Garden. The "Swedish Nightingale" (Jenny Lind's old title was worn by that lady's country-woman), made her début in 1867, and in 1870 was an unshakable attraction. I easily recall her entry on the stage of "Her Majesty's" as the heroine of "La Traviata," and the impression remains to this day as clear as it was on the morrow of the début. She came down the stage as a vision of beauty and grace, and as a creature of exquisite refinement, alike in dress, movement, attitude, and bearing. This was enough for the success of the night. Christine Nilsson was accepted before she had sung a bar of Violetta's music, and the charm of her acting and singing was but as the "one cheer more" of a popular toast.

I saw much of the Swedish artist during her English career, both in public and in private life. She changed but little in any respect, and was delightful in her relation to the amiable gentleman, and keen sportsman, Monsieur A. Rouzaud, who was the husband of her youth. Rouzaud served in the National Guard through the siege of Paris, and took part in more than one of the costly sorties ordered by that still more expensive hero, General Trochu. He carried into action a rifle of his own, which he afterwards brought to England. The weapon is mentioned in the following



letter, written as a "Good-bye," before Rouzaud and his wife left London for St Petersburg in 1874:—

"MON CHER MONSIEUR BENNETT,—J'avais l'intention d'aller vous prendre ce matin pour essayer ma carabine, mais, avec le brouillard qu'il fait, il nous serait impossible de voir le but au delà de 20 yards, et j'y renonce.

"Nous partons demain hélas! Nous quittons l'Angleterre, où nous laissons de si bons amis que nous regrettons, si sincèrement. Les préparatifs obligés d'une longue absence ne me permettent pas d'aller vous serrer la main, et je viens vous exprimer tout le chagrin que j'en éprouve. Ma femme et moi, nous unissons nos vœux bien sincères pour vous. . . .

"J'espère bien que nous nous verrons à Paris au mois de Janvier. Jus'que là, vous me permettrez de vous tenir au courant de nos faits et gestes en Russie, et de vous prouver ainsi que nous ne vous oublions pas.

"Mille remerciements pout tout ce que vous avez dit touchant *l'Artiste* pendant cette saison, et croyez que, en dehors de toute critique théâtrale, je serai toujours comme maintenant—Votre ami dévoué,

AT<sup>r</sup> ROUZAUD"

This letter has a postscript in which Rouzaud comes round again to the precious rifle:—

"P.S.—Si vous n'avez pas le temps de m'envoyer la carabine avant demain matin, ne vous inquiétez

*pas, car Madame Richardson passera chez vous pour la prendre et me l'adressera à Paris, afin que je vais pour les ours russes."*

Wood's prospectus, in the matter of artists, fell much short of the numerous company which Jarrett provided, and the impresario had, of course, to pay. Among the early ones on the scene, beside Nilsson, were Madame Volpini, my recollections of whom are too vague for trust; Mme. Trebelli-Bettini, another of Jarrett's clients; Signor Bettini, Charles Santley, Zoboli, a very good buffo, who came to London, if I rightly remember, with the light opera company at the Lyceum; and the tenor Mongini, who played the Moor to Mme. Nilsson's Desdemona when Wood brought out "Otello" at the end of June. Ilma di Murska, whose forceful characteristics took the public immensely, Foli, the Irish basso, and not a few others were also in Wood's team.

The greatest event of the Drury Lane season was undoubtedly the production of Wagner's "Der Fliegende Holländer" with Ilma di Murska as Senta, Charles Santley as the unhappy Dutchman, Foli as Daland, Perotti as Erik, and Rinaldini as the Helmsman. It is distinctly worth while to mention these names in connection with the parts played, because none of Wagner's operas had before been heard in England, and the names are therefore historic. As to the manner of the opera's reception, I most distinctly recall the bearing of

the audience during the long and curious scene in which Senta and the Dutchman look upon each other for the first time. The Londoners were held fast and as motionless as the hero and heroine, save that a few of them laughed and were hushed down. There was more mirth when the contrast between the eminently commonplace Daland, with his explanatory superfluities, and the still, contemplative figures of the hero and heroine was set before the public eye.

I have just read my notice of the performance in the *Daily Telegraph*, and found that I took special care as to the scene just indicated. I then said:—

“We cannot deny to all this business an impressive character, nor to some of the accompanying music a charm which may arise, however, from contrast with much more that is lugubrious and dreary to the last degree. For example, the Helmsman’s song, ‘Mit Gewitter und Sturm,’ seems to light up the Act, and, with its themes treated chorally as a finale, does further efficient service. But the Holländer’s soliloquy, and the Captains’ duet, call for a large stock of endurance in the hearing.”

With regard to the general effect, I said:—

“Nothing could have been more favourable than the reception of the work. The overture was encored, and most of the principal numbers were loudly applauded; the artists had to appear after

each Act, and an extra 'call' endorsed the success of Act 2. Such was the result of the first performance in England of a Wagnerian opera."

Santley's *Holländer* made up for certain dramatic shortcomings by the full beauty of his singing, but the strongest impression received at the first performance was due to Ilma di Murska's Senta. This was anticipated by all who had taken the measure of her art. Ilma was a strange person, and her unconventionality moved people to account for it by very free guesses. The favourite surmise attributed to her a gipsy origin, and a Hungarian gipsy is never without decided points of character. Nor was di Murska without them. It was noticed, for example, that every year, and for a certain time, the Hungarian soprano mysteriously disappeared, leaving no clue to her retreat. It was no business of mine, but curiosity is often more powerful than self-restraint, and I sought information from Jarrett, who, as her agent, was likely to know. Jarret's reply was that, in the autumn of each year, the prima donna was compelled by tribal law and custom to repair to the headquarters of her people, and live the primitive gipsy life. He spoke as in the palace of truth, but I feared that his manner was all in the way of business, and in that way I knew him to be a master.

Wood ruled in Drury Lane for one season, and then retired to his music-shop in Regent Street, much lighter in purse, as he told me himself, but

richer in experience. Taught by experience, he ever after permitted others to enjoy the pleasure of running grand opera.

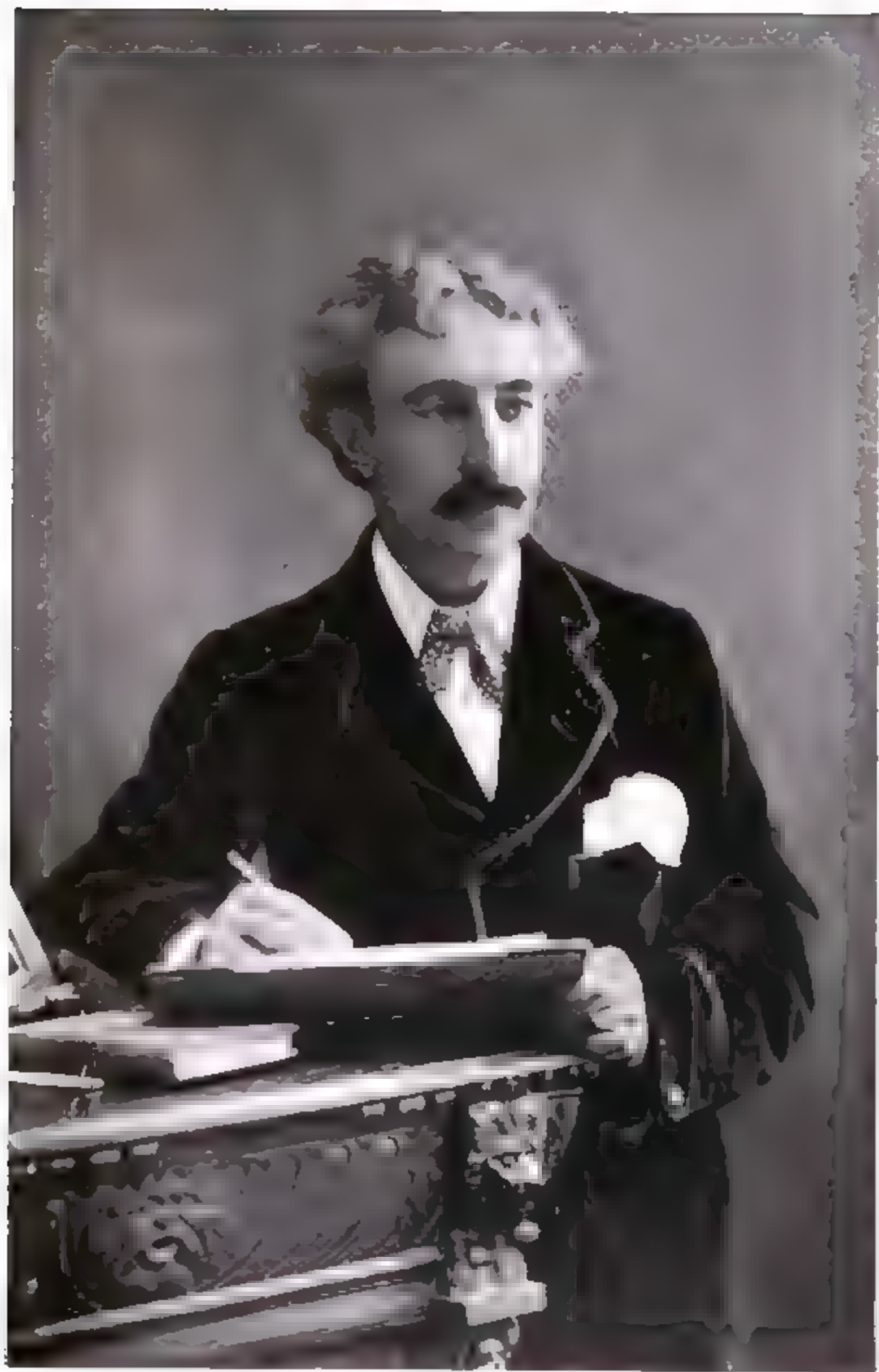
Curiously enough, the end of the same season brought the rupture of the Gye-Mapleson alliance. Each partner had had enough of the other, and they broke away to the old line of opposition. It was a case of "As you were."

Although, in 1871, conditions had much changed, the opera season was as busy as the fighting in France. Mapleson had gathered together a company with, under the circumstances, surprising success; he had secured Sir Michael Costa as conductor, and with him the veterans who could not think of deserting their old chief when he made a move, and he had taken Drury Lane, where George Wood's feathers were lying about—a terrible warning. The faithful Tietjens was at hand, and with her, Trebelli, Foli, and Ilma di Murska. There were Agnesi and Marimon likewise, and Sinico, Fancelli and Bauermeister, and so on to the number of a good working team. How it was all done I cannot tell, but the public expected it would be done, and asked no questions.

Fortune, however, did not give the two mighty opposites a clear field, all to themselves. The Gaiety struck in, as in '70, and wooed the public with a very compound opera called, "Letty, the Basket Maker," music by Balfe. It was an old work vamped up with scraps found among the composer's papers after his death, but not deriving

much advantage from the padding. The part of the Basket Maker, I well remember, was given to Charles Lyall, who had been conspicuously successful in various characters during Wood's season at Drury Lane. Noticing his Gaiety effort, I said: "Mr Charles Lyall, always artistic, whether as actor or singer, impersonated the Basket Maker with adequate skill and unflinching spirit. As usual, his 'make up' was a study in its way, and throughout every scene the artist showed the good taste which generally marks his efforts."

St James's Theatre also made another bid for public support, purveying "Royal National Opera," with Sidney Naylor as conductor, and a little flock of British artists following him. Rose Hersee was one of the *prime donne*, and appeared on the opening night (October 30, 1871) as Elvira in Balfe's "Rose of Castile." I see that in my notice of the performance I termed it a "dress rehearsal." That could scarcely have been Miss Hersee's fault, for she was a sprightly actress and a good singer in florid music. Years afterwards, when the buffo artist, Ciampi, was nearing the end of his labours at Covent Garden, I had occasion to speak of him as no longer a singer. That was a considerate remark under the circumstances, but Ciampi took a different view, and sued the *Daily Telegraph* for damages. On a previous occasion he had done the same thing, a correspondent of the paper having made statements about him which were not



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remarkable for correctness. In that case there was a settlement without going into court, and it may have been that Ciampi hoped for another windfall in the libel suit. Unluckily for him, the action had to be tried; the end of the trial being a verdict for the plaintiff, damages, one farthing, together with a remark from the judge that he would have given no damages at all. There were some moments of interest in the trial. Ciampi, for example, had many witnesses, on paper all willing to declare on oath that he had been a singer and was a singer still. But when the names of these witnesses were called no voice answered, till, at length, counsel still talking to gain time, it was announced that Miss Rose Herse had arrived. Ciampi smiled broadly; his solicitors and counsel beamed upon the fair artist, and the fair artist herself going into the box to give evidence as was expected of her, declaring that Ciampi really was a singer. Good lady; faithful among the faithless only she! Yet the buffo lost his case, and soon left England to return no more. He died, if I rightly remember, in Malta, some months later. By the way, neither the leading counsel (Russell) for the defendant, nor the leading counsel (Gill) for the plaintiff, put in an appearance, but the defending journal had an excellent second man in Charles Matthews.

Emma Albani made her début in England in 1872; appearing at Covent Garden as Amina ("La Sonnambula"). I was present on the occasion, and

fully conscious that its importance laid upon me a heavy load of responsibility. The new comer was but a half-blown rose, save as to her vocal skill, which good teaching and the pupil's capacity had developed beyond common. She was then eighteen years old, an artist of two seasons only ; in appearance more girlish than her age, and in dramatic action somewhat crude. The young Canadian, nevertheless, excited hopes as to her future, and afterwards warranted them, without, however, attaining the very highest rank. I wrote of her after witnessing two performances :—

“That there are good grounds for approval must be evident even to the constitutionally cautious. Mdlle. Albani's voice, so pure in its highest register ; her capacity of expression, so well shown in ‘Ah, non credea,’ and the intelligence which marks all she does, are facts impossible to overlook. In her vocation as an actress, moreover, we notice an absence of self-consciousness, and an earnestness of purpose which are always the forerunners of excellence. So far, however, as present knowledge goes, Mdlle. Albani is an artist who may achieve notable things in the future rather than one who is able to do so now. She has unquestionable power, but neither vocally nor dramatically does it yet appear that she is mistress of her art. Should subsequent experience establish this impression as a matter of fact, it will show that high positions on the lyric stage are not

carried by storm, except in those very rare cases where a nameless fascination leads captive the judgment."

This language may be styled "cautious," but the impression of possible, and even probable, success was true.

The season of 1872 brought with it to Covent Garden a great début and a sad disappointment. I take the following from my notice of the début:—

"Year after year rolled by, and still the man came not who was to succeed Giuglini and Mario, and extend the line of great tenors. Yet plenty of tenors came. We had them in abundance, but always with some flaw—some 'rift within the lute,' which sorely marred the music. They were tenors with a voice and no method, or with a method and no voice; they were singers and not actors, or actors and not singers; or they were respectable mediocrities who did everything decently but nothing well. So it has continued through the list of polished Italians, lusty Germans, and tremulous Frenchmen, who have essayed to gratify the most pressing want of the operatic world. But there is ever a coming man equal to each emergency, and sooner or later he comes, often passing from obscurity to fame at a step."

Thus preluded, the name of Italo Campanini appeared a first time in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph*. My first notice of this artist ran as follows:—

“At length Gennaro (the opera was ‘*Lucrezia Borgia*’) began to sing, the house listening judicially to the close of ‘*Di pescatore ignobile*,’ when it broke out into thunders of applause. What led to such sudden and general enthusiasm? Simply these things: a voice of rare sweetness, capable of the tenderest expression, wholly at the command of its owner, and of wide compass; a style which is emphatically that of an accomplished singer; phrasing very nearly faultless, and a sympathetic delivery which calls for sympathy in the hearer as an inevitable result. Such gifts in one person are not common, but Signor Campanini adds to them an agreeable personal presence, graceful stage manners, dramatic ability of no mean order, and those barely definable characteristics which separate the real artist from the mere performer. . . . As there could not be a shadow of doubt as to his worthiness, the audience frankly made a hero of the new-comer, cheering him on with all the force of hands and lungs.”

Such a first appearance was more than a promise. It ranked almost as an assurance, but, alas! my next notice of the artist contained these words:—

“The success of a remarkable début raised expectation to the highest point, but when a second and a third appearance produced results less striking, amateurs of pessimistic bent were not wholly without reason for shaking their heads. In point of fact a reaction set in, the existence of which

threatened serious disappointment. . . . Signor Campanini was plainly out of voice—a condition not rare in the case of artists new to the genialities of our climate—and we had every reason to believe that the fact explained such shortcoming as was noticeable.”

The fact was that our English May had done the poor Italian's vocal powers a mischief from which they never completely recovered. He remained on the stage, in England and America, during many years, but it may be doubted if the hopes called forth at his début were ever fully realised.

In view of the season, 1874, Mapleson proclaimed its coming, as far as he and “old Drury” were concerned, in a quite surprising manner. It had long been the custom of managers in this country to use the prospectus as a prodigious advertisement of glory in the past, and of greater glory in the future. This matter has already been touched upon in the course of some remarks upon the bold and adventurous rival of Gye, and I now go back to it for the purpose of showing that reform of the operatic prospectus did not, like a journey to London in the days of Dick Turpin, require the making of the reformer's will before setting about his task. The change was hailed on all sides by opera-goers, who were getting somewhat weary of regulation boastings, and of receiving promises very few of which were ever likely to be carried out.

Noticing the Drury Lane prospectus of 1874, I said :—

“Mr Mapleson next refers to the extensive repertory of his house, and virtually asks for public confidence with regard to the selections he may make from it. He next goes on to announce his new artists. . . . Here the novelty of the prospectus stands out in clear relief. Instead of telling us whence these recruits come, what successes they have achieved, and what extraordinary talents they possess, Mr Mapleson simply mentions their names, and adds a hope that they will give satisfaction to a public whose judgment he seeks neither to influence nor anticipate. This is the right sort of thing, and we are much mistaken if the public do not draw very favourable conclusions therefrom. It is only bad wine that needs a deal of bush. . . . We may add that the modest and unpretending character of the prospectus should excite rare confidence, and mark a welcome change. By and by, at a distant time let us hope, the epitaph upon Mr Mapleson as a manager may have the following among its proudest lines: ‘He reformed the operatic prospectus.’ What Mapleson did, in point of fact, was the work of reforming it all away. Little by little its blatant utterances ceased, and the public, weary of shameless ‘inexactitudes’ and pompous venalities, were content to have it so.”

Much other than the prospectus called for reform in 1874. Reviewing the operatic season of that

year in the *Daily Telegraph*, with the full liberty always accorded me in the service of that journal, I said :—

“ Looking back upon the doings of the past four months, there is much or little to be said about them according as we do, or do not, place ourselves at the standpoint of art. Occupying that position, we are bound to regard the season as a failure ; but, in point of fact, it should be judged on other grounds. Italian opera in London has very little concern with art, for the simple reason that if it had it could not exist. A manager in the position of Mr Gye deals with an audience that demands, first of all, to be amused without trouble, and that would quickly resent any other treatment. Given a round of favourite operas, about the merits of which no questions are asked or necessary, and a succession of popular singers, the highest good of our operatic public is attained. Nothing is easier than to abuse the London impresario, but before doing this we should take into account the circumstances of his position. Having no Government subvention, he is entirely at the mercy of the public ; and, with serious interests at stake, he cannot be expected to set himself in opposition to the will or whim of his supporters. This is why Italian opera remains, after so many years, a mere thing of fashion, almost wholly destitute of real artistic significance ; and this explains, also, why its managers cannot be charged with the blame of its

condition. . . . Let us, in dismissing the whole matter, look forward to the time, certainly coming, when the lyric drama will occupy a higher and nobler place—when it will cease to be an affair of musical platitudes and personal interests, in order to take its rightful position as the greatest and most beautiful combination of arts that the genius of man has conceived. That time may just now seem far off, but ‘when night is darkest dawn is nearest.’ ”

The spirit of operatic reform was in the air to make me write like that, knowing, as I must have known, that editors are bland in demeanour and civil of speech to institutions which are profitable advertisers. But no voice of reproach rang in my ears, and, curious to say, in 1874 began the long and almost unbroken process which has between then and now removed from our lyric stage so many just causes of reproach.

Turning the lamp of my memory upon the year 1877, I cannot miss seeing the *débris* of “Biorn.” “Pray,” exclaims the young reader whose recollections are still younger, “who or what was ‘Biorn’?”

“Biorn,” a distorted operatic version of “Macbeth,” was produced at the now vanished Queen’s Theatre, in the first month of the year just named. Its libretto was an adaptation by Frank Marshall, who, like the theatre, is no longer with us, and the music flowed easily from the pen of Lauro Rossi, director of the Royal College of Music Naples.



The conjunction of Marshall and Rossi, men supposed to have all their wits about them, was regarded as promising; the opera could not have been more liberally treated to the end of stage effect, and, though no one appeared to know much of the principal artists, there was just a chance of fortunate results. I attended the first performance, and, on leaving the theatre, brought away a heavy burden of doubt.

“A bitter and perplexed ‘What shall I do?’  
Is worse to man than worse necessity.”

Thus Coleridge and I agreed with him throughout that January evening. The question was, “Is ‘Biorn’ to be taken seriously or as a joke?” There was much evidence on each side, and I resolved, after considering it, to assume the joke, and get out of the difficulty by complimenting its capacity. Let it be granted that this was not on the lines of true criticism, but had I taken the serious issue I do not see how I could have remained decorous.

The design being to make fun with exceeding gravity, the choice of “Macbeth” as a groundwork could not but command approval. I commented favourably upon this, and upon Marshall’s retention of grave personages and serious circumstances in the original story, continuing:—

“But while all this keeps up an appearance of gravity, Mr Marshall is careful not to forget his rôle of humorist. We will not insist upon the

funny idea of showing us the Lady Editha (Lady Macbeth) in bed, under a blaze of limelight quite sufficient to account for the wakefulness of which her women complain. The most noteworthy drolery is of a subtler kind. When, for example, the heroine appears with her letter, some of the attendants confidently observe :—

“ ‘ If we only had a letter  
We might ponder o’er it too.’ ”

Again, in view of the doomed king’s coming, Biorn (Macbeth) is entreated to—

“ ‘ Seem an innocent flower  
Hid in leaves soft and green.’ ”

Whereupon the burly lord protests that he will be an ‘innocent flower’ and a serpent into the bargain. Once more, when Biorn’s servants are roused in the dead of night by the alarm of the King’s murder, they cry :—

“ ‘ What means this noise? O say, O say,  
Why wake us at this time of day?’ ”

Yet again when the Lady Editha’s women are weary of watching their sleepless mistress, they plaintively exclaim :—

“ ‘ When shall we know the sweet delight  
Of sleeping well for one whole night?’ ”

Rossi’s music written, one might say, at so much per yard, was not worth discussing, but the notion of distributing the “Macbeth” characters among artists either, with few exceptions, in their

novitiate, or unknown, did at least make the audience perceive that they were enjoying a Pyramus and Thisbe entertainment:—

“From that moment no stroke of humour escaped notice and approval. When Signor Rossi accompanied an apparition of the Norns (Witches) with a melody very like ‘All the blue bonnets are over the border,’ the house smiled; when two murderers came on instead of three, and Biorn exclaimed, ‘There were but two of you I spoke with; who is this other?’ it smiled more broadly; when Signor Mottino (Biorn) slipped in trying to avoid the descending curtain, it roared; when the curtain was lifted to show nothing but property chairs in a prostrate attitude, it roared again; when the Norwegian pine forest performed strange antics behind Biorn’s back, it grinned enjoyment; and when Mr Frank Marshall answered a call of ‘Author,’ wearing, with genial humour and point, a big white ‘comforter,’ the evening’s pleasure was complete.”

There is some reason to suppose that “Biorn” was played for the advantage of the prima-donna, but the critics did not consider themselves bound to follow suit. They said as little as possible, and, in so far as they kept silence, were kind. Not that they felt afraid, for some of them about the same time were very plainly taking to task such artists as Nilsson and Albani. Nilsson brought this upon herself after her return from a season in the United

States. Contact with the American public, then not famous for refinement in matters of art, had a pernicious effect upon the Swedish Nightingale, and especially upon her "Marguerite," certain points in which were, to say sooth, vulgarised. In the season of 1877 there were some signs of a return to the better way, and I eagerly availed myself of an opportunity for wholesome reminder. Nilsson again played "Marguerite," and I wrote :—

"It must be said that, at one time, Mdme. Nilsson showed a disposition to depart from the conception of 'Marguerite' with which she first charmed us. She made the heroine more demonstrative in trying to endow her with more dramatic significance, and, according to the degree in which this was done, took away the attraction of her maiden gentleness and innocence—qualities by no means lost when the world pointed at her the finger of scorn. But we are happy to know that Mdme. Nilsson has returned to her first love. Only twice on Saturday night did she awaken recollections of her gesticulating, heroic Marguerite, once at the close of the Jewel Song, and again towards the end of the Church scene."

The case of Albani was much like that of Nilsson. After the Canadian artist's "Marguerite" in 1876, I said :—

"A young prima-donna may at once take honours in the musical branch of her art, but only

experience in acting can make her an actress, and when this result follows—when latent faculties are brought out, and a second means of commanding public admiration is developed—a condition of risk at once arises. The tendency then is to exercise the dramatic faculties precisely as those of music, by always keeping them at highest stress, with more regard for effect upon the audience than for truth of characterisation. We had an example of this on Thursday night. When Mdlle. Albani first essayed the part of Marguerite, she emulated the early style of Mdlle. Nilsson in the same character, and was all that could be desired of diffidence, modesty, and gentleness. But just as the Swedish artist went on to change the part till it became demonstrative and almost vulgar—a position from which she has since happily withdrawn it—so her Canadian sister, without as yet going so far, is committing the error of trying to make Marguerite impressive from the demonstrative, heroic, high-flown point of view. . . . We consult Mdlle. Albani's highest interests, not in glossing these facts over, but in telling her that she exercises her ripening powers as an actress with far more zeal than discretion. In the case of Marguerite, the error consists in mistaking the very basis of the heroine's character. Impressionable as the German maiden may be, we know that she wholly lacks the Southern temperament with which she is sometimes credited. But even were the case otherwise, a due sense of fitness and

regard for climax would keep the gentleness of Marguerite intact."

In 1881, I was able to speak of Nilsson's early "Marguerite" as wholly reinstated :—

"Mdme. Nilsson now presents us with the Marguerite of her early operatic years—a being all gentleness and tenderness, with as great a capacity for loving as for suffering, and exercising over all sympathies supreme control. But it may be questioned if she ever went as far on the old lines as she did last Saturday night. Till then something of inappropriate demonstrativeness clung to her in the scene of the Jewels, but this has now disappeared, and we see no more than the natural delight of a modest girl who is half afraid of the unwonted baubles even as she puts them on."

I have always regarded this as a remarkable case of perversion under one set of conditions, and of recovery under another. Not a few such cases have come under my notice, with always a female artist as the subject. Women, I suppose, are more highly sensitive than men, and more fully susceptible to the influences of the public upon whom they depend for name and fame. If that be so, a vulgar public tends to make a vulgar artist.

It would be better for the women of all musical grades if they thought more of their art and less of their audience. They are, or were at the time to which I now refer, ever ready to see in occurrences

the most commonplace something menacing to their artistic credit and position, and many are the letters of complaint, laden with hasty conclusions, and unwarranted suspicions, which the postman has left at my door. I will give a case in point.

For some reason or other, quite forgotten now, I did not attend a performance in which a certain lady played the leading rôle. As I was then working singlehanded, of course no notice appeared in the paper, and promptly came a letter:—

“I received so much encouragement from the kind consideration with which you treated my singing last season that I have been anxiously looking for your opinion of my performance of — on Thursday. I can hardly find words to express to you how hurt and disappointed I feel in not finding any mention of me in the *Daily Telegraph*, as I can assure you that your criticisms were not only a source of much pleasure and gratification to me, but were highly valued for the instruction I derived from them.

“I pray you most earnestly, my dear sir, to let me know why I have forfeited your notice of my début, whereby I am left in entire ignorance as to your opinion of my present efforts. Believe me, I shall recognise your doing so as a very great kindness.”

Not all letters inspired by private discontent were so cleverly made to suggest complimentary

feeling. Some were full of the incoherence of anger, others were sarcastic, and yet others clumsily ironic, but they all shared a common fate. They passed through the fire unto their appropriate Moloch, that which I have quoted being preserved only by accident.

Artists of the sterner sex troubled me in like manner very rarely, and the exceptions were principally cutters of chaff, the humour of which, for the most part, appeared in its want of humour. I cannot say positively, but it may have been that the fewness of male artists' complaints per the penny post was caused by a sort of rule among them that criticisms were not to be acknowledged as read. Of course they were read, the prohibition was against admitting the exercise. I remember one case in which the unwritten rule was strictly observed, the scrupulous person being a very conspicuous English singer. He made no secret of his indifference to criticism, and the critics believed him with very considerable qualification. There came a time, however, when for a certain purpose it was imperative that the singer should know what the Press said of him. He compelled himself to read, therefore, and when he had read is said to have remarked: "Had I known they spoke so well of me I should have put up my terms." There is no doubt that this artist made an honest profession. That it was wise I do not say, but, happily, the point is not "germane to the issue."

Another English singer adopted a curious regu-







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RUBINSTEIN

"LET US BE SILENT"

J. DAVISON



DAVISON IN TWO MOODS

lation for his own guidance. I recall his saying to me, as we were discussing the relations of critics and artists: "For my part, I never read criticisms unless they are about myself, and then I look only at the language applied to me. As to the rest, it goes straight to the w.p.b." Examples of this kind might easily be found in sufficient number to explain the non-resentment per letter of aggrieved male artists.

I have wandered away from opera; let me go back to it.

The year 1881 is notable in the record of metropolitan music for various reasons. It was a year of such hustle as would be considered creditable even at the present time, and it provoked me to review it under the head of "The Musical Season," beginning thus definitely:—

"This year the agencies, all and some, that produce music have been prodigal in our regard. They have glutted the market, stimulated an almost feverish activity, satiated the most Gargantuan appetite, exhausted critical endurance, and left a general sensation of breathlessness. At one time the world of amateurs and connoisseurs was absolutely bewildered. It did not know which way to turn amid a hundred different allurements."

At such a time an amateur opera was not to be escaped easily. At all events it came, and presented itself to London as "Il Rinnegato," a work composed by a Hungarian gentleman, the Baron

Bodog Orczy, who had at one time held an official position in connection with music within the Austrian Empire. Orczy came to London, and found no difficulty in winning the sympathy and support of an influential circle for himself and his work. One lady in particular threw herself heart and soul into the Baron's cause, and thought it no trouble to bear his ponderous full score to any address where there was a chance of winning a friend to its side. I had admiration for her unselfish devotion, and pity for the disappointment which was almost certain to ensue. London is no place for amateur composers of operas, but the Baron and his friends induced Mapleson to produce it in the Haymarket. In my notice of the first performance I said :—

“It belongs, perhaps, to Nature's system of compensation that barons, marquises, princes, and so on, have a hard time on the operatic stage. Anyhow, this is a law so sternly enforced that he must be a bold man who, if ennobled in any degree, ventures to tread the boards. When Rudolf enters the Wolf's Glen ('Der Freischütz') to keep his appointment with Caspar, one shade after another waves him back with imploring gestures. So, when a titled composer knocks at a stage-door nowadays, pathetic apparitions interpose, and with mute eloquence beseech him to run away before it opens. Thus might Prince Poniatowski, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and the Marquis D'Ivry

have appealed to the Hungarian Baron, each adding force to his touching argument by pointing to the semblance of a dust-covered and forgotten opera. . . . We sincerely trust that the Baron's title will not, at this juncture, be remembered to his disadvantage. He can no more help being a Baron than Pitt, on a certain famous occasion, could help being a young man. Let the public remember this, and show themselves as ready to act justly towards the composer of 'Il Rinnegato' as though, like the author of 'Don Giovanni,' he were in a position to be kicked by any upper servant of a German princeling."

As to the music of this amateur opera, I make no doubt that many a shrewd reader put the right interpretation upon the following remarks from the same article :—

"It would not be courteous to Baron Bodog Orczy, and might prove cruel, were we to judge the music of his opera on slight acquaintance. There is reason to believe that he never intended the work for superficial examination, but rather that the earnest mind might have something to contemplate again and again before success in sounding the depth and scaling the height of its task. We are bound to express our full assurance that this assumed purpose is fulfilled to the uttermost, and that only a resolute will can master 'Il Rinnegato.' The Baron is not a flippant composer, or even one who aspires to the honour of pouring

lend themselves to vocal effect. The result is a stream of harsh and unlovely sounds, possibly recognised by M. Rubinstein as conveying the feeling of the words, but looked upon by most others, we should say, as objectionable in a high degree. The accompaniments are to match. All manner of ungainly progressions are used; diminished sevenths are crowded on each other's heels, and chords having no natural affinity are brought cheek by jowl, with the usual consequence of unseemly alliances. All this indicates a dread of being thought commonplace, or an overpowering desire to attain originality, no matter what the cost; and it is this, we venture to believe, that will stand in the way of the opera."

"Il Demonio" ran its course in this country, and in others, with quite remarkable speed.

In 1882 the Royal Italian Opera became the Royal Italian Opera (Limited), and numbered among its properties all the appliances necessary to a board of directors, etc., etc. The project was intended to be comprehensive of more than the machinery at Covent Garden. "Anglo-Italian Opera," I wrote at the time, "is sagaciously endeavouring to rally its entire remaining force within the walls of Covent Garden, buying up Mr Mapleson, and giving him a subordinate post on the other side of the Atlantic, at the same time taking care, as far as may be, that 'Her Majesty's Theatre' shall not fall into the hands

of anybody disposed to perpetuate a condition of divided interests. The move, should the public make up the £200,000 asked for, will no doubt give renewed vitality to a languishing cause." This was the second step towards a constitution which recognises no operatic speculator, but governs through a syndicate in some sort representative of the whole body of supporters. The change undoubtedly made Covent Garden more interesting than it had been during the autocracy of Frederick Gye. All through that time the great theatre was highly respectable in an artistic sense, more or less successful, and decidedly dull — dull, that is to say, by comparison with the adventurous career of its rival in the Haymarket. Mapleson's house had a sort of sporting interest not at all disagreeable to an English public. One never knew what was about to happen there, and everybody watched the bright and buoyant tactics of the manager with sympathy for him when misfortune came. Mapleson was a pleasant fellow as well as a resourceful man; his quality of resource being strikingly shown when he turned an American soprano, Miss Nicholson, into Mdlle. Nikita, the heroine of a romantic adventure among the Indians of Niagara!

But in 1882 a portentous event came about which gave a new and commanding interest to matters operatic, forced our eyes from the dawning glory of the Royal Italian Opera (Limited), and

made us temporarily indifferent to the changeful fortunes of Mapleson.

Before this year we had seen a few examples of Wagner's earlier works come to us in "single spies," and Italian trappings, the disguise being adopted to fit them to circumstances, which is not at all a Wagnerian procedure. Now they came in a battalion. I described the invasion just after the campaign :—

"Teutonic art came in a new aspect, offering works, the very names of which are synonymous with a world-wide controversy notorious for uncompromising give-and-take. The Germans, too, conjured with the spell of a man who, be his faults what they may, stands forth as the greatest musical genius of the age, while the advantages enjoyed at the outset were sustained as time went on, by just repute for merit in execution. Against all this, Italian opera, with its stale charms, could do little. The musical world talked of nothing but the "Nibelungen Ring," the "Meistersänger," "Tristan and Isolde," Richter and his orchestra, the German artists and the German ensemble. "La Traviata and "Il Trovatore," *et hoc genus omne*, even with renowned first ladies singing their best and loudest over the footlights, were for once deposed, thrust into a corner, and forgotten. We certainly do not complain of this result. It was inevitable, and, from some points of view, it was just. . . .

Who could tell what great things rivalry of German



discipline, thoroughness and devotion might do for slipshod Italian opera? It might give new life and new charm to an entertainment which loose and inartistic habits had made vapid and profitless, and it would certainly abolish the wedding guests who contemplate Lucia's madness with the equanimity of attendants in a lunatic asylum, the performers who bow themselves out of their parts and back again at each round of applause, and the bouquets, supplied by contract, which go round and round like a stage army."

Naturally, fully developed Wagnerism stirred up the passions of partisans on both sides, and the war was fast and furious. Even the outside public, who knew little and cared less about the matter in dispute, joined in it. Some were shocked by the indecencies of the stories, others complained that they could make nothing of the plots, yet others, angered by the weariness of boredom, raved against old Wotan, and not a few were driven nearly to hysteria by the cries of the Walkyries. Although warned of what was coming, at the first performance of "Die Walküre," a lady in my box, frightened by the appearance of so many tremendous German women, and shaken like a leaf when they were in full cry, exclaimed: "Take me out, take me out, or I shall scream with them."

It is unnecessary to deal with Angelo Neumann's Wagner from the historical point of view. I am not writing a history, but impressions and recol-

lections only, and I do not lose sight of the fact that the novelties of 1882 have become the commonplaces of 1908. There is no more to be said about them by way of criticism, and a few sentences from the article with which I parted from them on May 30, 1882, will suffice as a sample of the indignation felt by some of us at the indifference of the London public towards works which, whatever their defects, were entitled to patient study and judgment based upon ample knowledge. In that article I said:—

“Last night the original programme of Herr Neumann’s enterprise in this country was completed, and when the ‘Walkyrie’ and ‘Götterdämmerung’ have again been performed at cheap prices, the ‘Nibelung’s Ring’ will return to the land which produced it. Wagner’s Trilogy has not proved a success amongst us. Our public saw its approach without enthusiasm, and will witness its departure with indifference. They refused to be stimulated even by the high prices, which suggested expectation of a rush for tickets, nor could the remarkable prominence given to the subject by the entire metropolitan press save the theatre from a disheartening array of empty seats. In so far as this bespoke lack of healthy interest in musical developments, we unfeignedly regret it. A nation really progressive in art matters is neither prejudiced on the one hand nor indifferent on the other.”

I never exchanged a word with Wagner, either *viva voce* or in writing. Honestly, I never wished

to do so, and therefore sought no opportunity, while it is more than likely that Wagner on his part would have sported his oak against me had I tried to break in upon the presence. I recall how, at Bayreuth in 1876, when chatting with Edward Dannreuther outside the Wagner theatre, I made some remark which he took as denoting that I wished to be received by the master. He was absolutely wrong, but at that time the "perfect Wagnerite" laboured under an impression that everybody was dying to penetrate the sacred recesses of Villa Wahnfried. That very many were languishing under the stress of a longing to do so is undoubtedly true, but the perfect ones were not capable of imagining an exception. So it came to pass that Dannreuther drew himself up stiffly and said, "The master does not receive," to which I made reply, "And the outsider does not visit."

I imagine that no reasonable being shuns another because of an honest difference in matters of art. The thing is too absurd for words. It was not Wagner the artist who was a cause of offence to me, but Wagner the man. I disliked him for his personal qualities, which, as he is dead and gone, I would not describe if it were needful to do so. Enough that to me he was "impossible," and there was an end of the whole matter. But that did not hinder me from perceiving his high rank as a musical genius, nor from acknowledging it on all fitting occasions.

The musical critic in London has very little time

for running after operas abroad, and generally speaking, the British reader does not find in such foreign matter much that is specially attractive. But on four occasions, in forty years, I have crossed the "silver sea" to report a new work; going twice to Bayreuth, and twice to Milan; hearing in the old Franconian town the "Ring" and "Parsifal"; in the Lombardian capital, Verdi's "Otello" and "Falstaff." Nobody will deny importance to the production of these works, or be surprised to hear that some incidents connected therewith remain in my memory.

In 1876 I went to Bayreuth by way of Salzburg, Vienna, and Dresden; by no means the nearest way, of course, but I intended a sort of pilgrimage to illustrious musical graves, and these cities stood first in my regard. In about three weeks I had worn the pilgrimage motive out, and then passed from death to life as inspired by Wagner. A great many people know Bayreuth now, but thirty years ago the familiars were few, and among the crowds who flocked to the first performance of the "Ring" there was much anxiety on the point of hotels, private lodgings, food, drink, etc. etc. As to lodgings I was at ease. A Londoner, one of the Chappells, if I rightly remember, had secured tickets for the first cycle, and also a lodging in a quaint house in an ancient street connected—the house, not the street—with a brewery, or, at any rate, some beery interest. As time went on towards the date of the festival, the owner of these

precious privileges found that he would be unable to make the journey, and accepted Julius Benedict's offer to dispose of them on finding a customer. In search of the customer Benedict wrote to me, and the result was "deal." So I approached Bayreuth with a mind at ease as to encampment and commissariat.

I found my apartment quite beery as to odour, but it was evidently the best room in the house, or, at any rate, one of the best rooms, for, separated from it by a very thin partition, was another occupied by a married couple, Germans as to name, Londoners by residence. The place was clean, very homely, and, in the best sense, domestic. I was therefore content, but not so the lady on the other side of the thin partition. One day her husband came to me with information that his wife found living in a bed-sittingroom excessively inconvenient, and thought it possible that, on being acquainted with the fact, I would give up my room and find another elsewhere. "Will you do so?" said the husband. I am sure that I looked more than a little surprised, but, not knowing the customs of the country, I refrained from British expletives, and quite gently informed my applicant that, having come to Bayreuth in discharge of an important duty, I could not think of wasting any part of my time in perambulating the town with an eye to lodgings, and I assured him, also sweetly, that if I gave up my room under such conditions I should certainly not deserve to find any other.

Whereupon he went away. When I desire to tell a "cheek" story, this is the one chosen.

Among the representatives of London papers in Bayreuth at this time were Davison (*Times*) and Watson (*Standard*). I do not think there are many other prominent professional critics, but some of the futures of prominent journalism put in an appearance, such as Franz Hueffer, Ebenezer Prout, and Frost (afterwards of the *Standard*), with, no doubt, others whom I cannot now call to mind. Davison was far from being in good health, and had reached Bayreuth by easy stages, staying long at the Hôtel de Russie, Frankfort, where he met Watson, who saw him through the rest of the journey. Under ordinary conditions, I should have been with my old friend, but I early saw that all my time and energies would be called for by the work I had to do. Unflinchingly, therefore, I ruled out friendship with everything else that stood in the way. Davison did not like this, and I was on that account the more glad when told by Watson that Hueffer had charge of "J. W. D.," and shepherded him very well.

On the "Siegfried" day, as Watson and I were wending our dusty, sun-tried way along the road between the town and the Wagner theatre, my companion cried "Look out!" and an hotel carriage dashed past, bearing Davison and Hueffer triumphantly to the place which we strove to attain on foot, with much expenditure of sudorific moisture. Here was a striking exemplification of *les*

*extrêmes se touchent*, for the two men in the carriage were on all Wagnerian points far as the poles asunder. Some time afterwards, Hueffer gained a footing in the *Times* office, the editor gradually took Davison's work away, and gave it to the German assistant, while the old hand went down to Margate, there to live the rest of his days, and there to die.

That Davison deeply felt his supersession, I know full well, but his work was done before he laid down his pen, and though the *Times* might have secured his withdrawal in better form, it must be said to the praise of Printing House Square, that the famous critic's full working salary was paid up to the date of his death. That salary, it is true, did not float poor Davison beyond the dreams of avarice.

The English critics had a hard time at Bayreuth. I, of course, speak only for myself on that score, and my day was apportioned thus : 4 a.m., up and writing notice of previous day's performance ; 10.30 a.m., posting article to London, and taking breakfast ; noon till 5 p.m., performance, varied by making notes and taking luncheon in restaurant ; evening, searching for dinner (and not always finding it) ; afterwards writing short telegraphic report of the day's performance for London and despatching it. Then, to bed. This meant, as the days went on, a terrible draft upon staying power, especially as the poor critic's food was uncertain in supply, and, to an Englishman at any rate, rather dubious in quality. Years later, I was

one of nine or ten journalists who followed the German Emperor about Palestine and the Lebanon, in charge of a tourist agent, and at the mercy of Arab cookery. That experience, in point of rations, was not exactly blissful, to say nothing of the fact that we had to contend for our meals with vast armies of flies. But, at any rate, the supplies, each of its sort, were plentiful enough. At Bayreuth, when meal-time came, I could not be certain of getting the meal. I remember how, one evening, Alberto Randeggar piloted me to a hostelry called the Red Eagle, at any rate, the bird, like ourselves, was of a ravenous nature, and opened its beak on the signboard as though "screaming for the thrones of Kings." The place was crowded with diners, and we had to "stand and wait" for a vacated table, passing the time, as to myself, in noting the amazing feats of hungry German guests. At length a party near by found that they had had enough, and confessed the fact by leaving their seats, two of which we appropriated, and summoned a waiter. We might have as well have called spirits from the vasty deep. At last, however, one was caught, took our order, and went away. We saw him no more. A second, drifting by us with the air of a man who had passed through great tribulation (as no doubt he had, poor fellow!), solemnly assured us that everything on the menu was really "off." What was to be done? My friend rose, a stern resolve gleaming in his eyes. "I am going to the kitchen,"







LOUISA MARGARET NICHOLSON  
(NIKITA)

said he, and plunged vaguely in several directions, leaving me to await the issue of the raid in unexpressive anxiety. Presently I saw, above the heads of intervening diners, an expansive smile on a beaming countenance. He is coming, laden with a victor's spoils! Sound your trumpets, beat your drums! You, good reader, may not know the value of a fine roast capon under the circumstances I have detailed, and if so, you cannot be expected to appreciate the situation. You may, however, understand in part the rapidity with which our bird began to vanish, and believe that, in the end, emulous of the Cheshire Cat which Alice saw in Wonderland, there was nothing left of him save a smile. My companion had, he assured me, raided the kitchen, seized the capon, and—but the rest I have told. It was a fine achievement, partly attributable no doubt to the loose ethics of the "Ring."

There was much to interest at Bayreuth in those hot weeks of 1876. Two wearers of crowns put in an appearance under conditions curiously contrasting. The poor King of Bavaria came early, so that he might go round the "Ring," and return home before the arrival of old Kaiser Wilhelm. There was no pretence of affection between these monarchs, or between their peoples, and something in the way of proof as to this fact came under my notice while in Bayreuth.

Before going to the Franconian city, I stayed a while in Munich, where was an exhibition

of ancient German art, and its modern imitations. Writing about this interesting display, I pointed out, what to me seemed clear enough, that in point of artistic interest and value the Bavarian examples were superior to those of North Germany. This declaration had a result. Going to my "brewery" one day, I found awaiting me a coroneted card, inscribed with the name of a noble Bavarian lady. She had called, as a note left with the card testified, to thank me for having done justice to her country, and to express a hope that I would call at her hotel and receive some information which she was anxious to convey. One thing at a time, so, thanking the countess for her courtesy, I begged her, by letter, to excuse me from going further into the comparison or contrast of Prussia and Bavaria, inasmuch as, for the time being, I knew nought save Wagner and his "ism." She was good enough to do so, but how the lady found out by whom the articles in the *Daily Telegraph* were written, and where I lodged in Bayreuth, has ever since remained a mystery. True, she might have gone to the police, who probably knew more about me than I was cognisant of myself, or thought they did, which is all the same to a policeman.

Another episode in the Bayreuth comedy of 1876 had to do with Franz Liszt and Julius Benedict. Between these two some disturbance of cordial relations had occurred, but what it was all about I have unfortunately forgotten. Enough





**BENEDICT LISZT**  
(MAYHEATH, 1876)



**COSTA COUNOD**  
(REHARSING "REDEMPTION")

that Benedict remembered, and the recollection was a load upon his spirit. He told me, before the Bayreuth days came on, that he was doubtful of attending the "Ring." "Liszt," he said, "will make it unpleasant for me, or, perhaps, I shall make it unpleasant for myself. Anyhow, I think I had better stay at home." I knew he would not do this because he could not, the deed being alien to his nature, and, sure enough, he answered my expectations by appearing in due course. The inevitable happened; Liszt and Benedict met in the public way somewhere, but instead of "wigs on the green," two elderly men were seen hanging round each other's neck. That they both shed tears, and that Liszt's were, as suggested by an audacious wink, of the crocodile order, no reader is bound to believe. Davison was a spectator of the great reconciliation, and described it to Charles Lyall, with certain additional touches to heighten the effect. He was ever artistic in such matters.

Were I to deal even lightly with details of all the interesting and amusing events of Bayreuth in '76, an inordinate amount of space would be taken up, and this section would give serious offence by its lack of proportion. To avoid a result so offensive to the intelligent reader, I pass on.

The production of Verdi's "Otello" at the Milan La Scala in February 1887, may hardly pass, if its date be severely judged, as belonging to the domain of "Recollections." It is too near the

present time, and what everybody remembers is not for any one body to regard as a personal possession. I have, however, some connected incidents which may passably serve my turn by an exercise of the kind reader's grace.

The illustrious composer of "Otello" personally directed the preparation and production of his work. I have known other composers do the same thing, but not in a like spirit. They have bowed to the will of the impresario, or listened indulgently to suggestions from the orchestral chief, or yielded to the storm of public voices declaring that faith should be kept as regards a promise given. To none of these influences would Verdi respond. He was at La Scala to see that justice was done to "Otello," and in comparison with that object, the pleasure of manager, chef d'orchestre and amateurs went for nothing. Again and again was the first performance put off, and every day and almost all day long, were the performers kept severely to the point of duty. Probably Tamagno, if he ever swore, vented oaths in copious abundance; and Maurel, if given to invocations, may have called upon all the creatures in the Jardin des Plantes, but such exercises, if possible, were in vain. The old master went calmly on till he was satisfied.

Some of us, strangers in Milan, did not resent the delays. We explored the city at leisure, sampled the theatres, and I, in company with my friend, Samuel Aitken, of the Alpine Club, went off to Venice, and had a first look at the



Bride of the Sea; all these pleasures being heightened by the fact that they came to us without expectation, even as the food which the ravens brought to Elijah. I have mentioned the Alpine Club, but only for the further glory of my adventurous companion, who, to look upon Venice in February, refrained from sporting with the Lyskam in January.

I brought a souvenir from the Grand Canal, which lasted me through some anxious days. It was a cold.

## CHAPTER XV

### MUSICAL FESTIVALS

My first festival—A stranger's trials—Gloucester and Norwich—Festival struggles at Norwich—Cathedral festivals—Conductors and side-shows—Festival jokes—Musical critics at festivals—Various incidents—Musical journalists and festival officials—Press tickets—Abolish them—An outburst—Festival conductors and soloists—A change for the better.

**I** MIGHT, if it were worth while, claim to be not only the doyen of musical critics, but also of festival-goers. In each capacity, I started work in 1865; between that long ago and now failing to attend an important festival at the most only four times. Once I missed Gloucester through being then on the west coast of Ireland, investigating and relieving the prevailing distress (1880); twice I failed Leeds by reason of other important engagements, such as following the Kaiser in Palestine and to Damascus. There was, I think, another like case, which memory has not held so firmly. Considerably over a hundred festivals have actually come under my notice, the cities and towns contributing to this respectable total being Gloucester, Worcester, Hereford, Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Bristol, Exeter, Cardiff, Brighton, Norwich, Sheffield, Leeds, Scarborough,

Liverpool, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Southport, Glasgow, and a certain little Yorkshire village. Of these the festivals at Wolverhampton, Brighton, Scarborough, Liverpool and Glasgow have given up the ghost, after a more or less brief struggle; the others are still in being, and if appearances may be trusted, are likely to remain so. This, however, is not quite so certain as I would have it, for, undoubtedly, a great change is coming over the long-accepted rule and order of our "music-meetings." I shall have more to say later on the matter.

In 1865, for some months before the Gloucester Festival took place, I had acted as a reporter of concerts, and such like, for the *Sunday Times*. My reader has been told this before, and I simply remind him now. The paper was of no weight in the councils of music, and I was absolutely unknown—a mere waif, or stray, that had drifted by accident into the area of the art, and, like all such things, liable to be swept up and cast into the fire. But I felt none the less ambitious on that account, and as the Festival drew near, my mind was made up to attend it. So, one day, I presented myself before Mr Seale, the proprietor of my first journal, and enlarged upon the fitness with which the *Sunday Times* might place itself among other important papers in the Festival jury-box. My eloquence, though very sincere, proved of none effect. Seale remarked that the *Sunday Times* was a London weekly, and that musical doings in Gloucester did not concern

it. He graciously added, however, that as I seemed to wish it, he would accept a report of the Festival, provided it cost him nothing. Let me confess that, for the moment, I was staggered by the proffered conditions. But only for a moment. My resolve to go held fast, though I had to support a wife and family upon means which left nothing to spare. I "pinched" to do it—pinched myself, that is; going to Gloucester by the cheapest way, and securing a bedroom in one of a row of cottages some distance from the centre of the city. My food I could get as opportunity offered, but, of course, I was outside the zone of hospitality in my character as a friendless stranger. That, however, troubled me not at all, so long as I had a shilling in my pocket.

The next morning saw me bowing before the majesty of the Festival secretary, and pleading for a ticket of admission to the performances. The official's name was Brown; his ordinary rôle, if I rightly remember, was that of drawing-master at an important school hard by, and he lived in a quaint old house on the eastern side of the cathedral yard. Said Mr Brown, as I approached him in his secretarial office, "Well, sir, what can I have the pleasure of doing for you?" That was promising, and I could see, further, that I had to deal with a kindly little man. "I represent the *Sunday Times*, Mr Brown, and shall be obliged by a ticket of admission

for the week." A cloud of doubt settled on the secretary's face. Opening a drawer, he took out a note-book and examined a particular page. Then he spoke again: "I don't find the name of the *Sunday Times* in the list of papers to which admission has been granted." "No, sir," I replied, "but I have lately been appointed its critic, and I want to change all that and much else." "That's right," said Brown; then, after a pause for consideration, he filled up, and handed to me a ticket for any vacant seat in the north aisle. That second-class place I took to be a compromise between good nature and official strictness, but anyhow it served my purpose very well; and, as none of the critics knew me, and I was equally ignorant of them, there was no occasion for false shame.

At Norwich, in 1866, I had another occasion to be resolute. Although only a year older, the *Sunday Times* had acquired more than a proportionate degree of wisdom, and was not only desirous that I should attend the festivals of the season, but also willing to help in making it worth my while. The office, therefore, wrote to the Norwich committee asking for the usual facilities, and was quite taken aback when a reply came, stating that the *Sunday Times* was not on the list of journals so favoured, for which reason the request could not be granted. As in the case of Gloucester, this did not for a moment stop me. I travelled to Norwich, found some

comfortable lodgings in a small private house near the cathedral, and then marched upon St Andrew's Hall, to settle the question of my admission. I was directed to the door by which the artists usually enter, and there found J. W. Davison and Julius Benedict engaged in cheerful talk. By that time I had formed Davison's acquaintance, and he, on my entrance, said to Benedict, "Here's the *Sunday Times*; know each other." The Festival conductor was at once smiling and gracious, declaring that he was very glad to see me, and soon, as a practical wind-up, adding "Have you been properly attended to?" I stated that the committee had refused my paper's request for a ticket. "Pooh, nonsense!" exclaimed Benedict; then, turning to a man standing near, "Make out a press ticket for Mr Bennett of the *Sunday Times*, and bring it to me." It was brought and handed over with expressions of surprise that such a mistake should have been made. So that was put straight, and never again was there a question of shutting out or letting in the "unknown stranger" of Gloucester.

Speaking of Norwich, I am tempted to show, by a conspicuous example, what difficulties are sometimes placed in the way of Festival managers by the "parochial mind." I told the story in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of September 6, 1869, and now reproduce it:—

"Norwich is a musical place, but getting up musical festivals in it appears to be hard work.

The city council lacks enthusiasm, and its committee objects to repair the city organ. For six years that instrument has made no figure in the corporate balance sheet, but the Festival committee recently discovered that several of the pipes were corroded, the notes were dumb, and the conducting wires broken and useless. This had to be set right, and the committee counted the cost, £21, 10s. The members, in despair of getting so much from the city treasury, agreed to contribute £7 out of their own funds. But they were not at all sanguine as to the balance. Hence a bold resolution to make the repairs first, and ask for the money afterwards. They asked, and the city committee having twice deliberately refused, appeal was made to the town council. Mr Watson moved that the £14, 10s be not voted. The organ had served very well on other occasions unrepaired; why not on this? Mr Tuck warmly advocated the grant. Was it the wish of the Council that the organ should break down in the midst of the Festival? He would say in the words of the poet: 'The man that hath no music in himself . . . let no such man be trusted.' Therefore, let them not trust Mr Watson! Mr Johnson did not see that the council should be asked to pay for repairs to their own property, but Mr Taylor begged his colleagues to remember how much money the Festival brought into the city, and suggested that the insult should be pocketed. Whereupon the Council became magnanimous.

The trumpery sum was not worth fighting about, said Mr Crosse, while Mr Cooper 'trusted they would no longer quarrel over such a trifle as £14.' This advice was taken; the Festival committee got the money, and the Festival itself became a possibility."

Had the Norwich "parochial mind" been a trifle more dense, the Festival might have passed beyond possibility.

Here let me say that Festival authorities forty years ago were not always remarkable for politeness or suavity when dealing with members of the press. I quite agree that allowance should be made for them in this regard, because it sometimes happened that members of the press were as lacking in the graces of behaviour as themselves; standing too much upon an unduly heightened sense of their own importance, and so on. Since the time of which I speak, a great change for the better has taken place, but still there is room for improvement, and much further good might be done by abolishing the journalist's free pass, which, I have always thought, degrades him in the common eye. I could say much on this question, but I touch it now only in passing.

Forty years ago the Festivals at Gloucester, Worcester, Hereford and Norwich (all these being cathedral cities) ended with a ball, the sole survivor of various "side shows," which clung more or less tenaciously to the main attraction. The



only other festival at that time was held at Birmingham, which, not being then the capital of a bishopric, did not dance. There is no harm in a ball, but I confess to something in the nature of a shock when, entering St Andrew's Hall at Norwich, I saw the votaries of Terpsichore gyrating under the ecclesiastical roof, and among the soaring columns of what was originally the church of a monastery. But as Henry VIII. sold its consecrated character to the citizens, along with its stones and mortar, the citizens, having an abundance of churches, turned it into a town hall and a place of festive gathering. Wherefore I need not have been shocked, even though the scene did remind me of the nuns' revels in "Robert le Diable."

The ball of the Three Choirs I never cared to witness, and I came too late on the scene to refuse the Gloucester "Ordinary"—not a Bishop but a sort of public dinner—together with Gloucester Races, both functions being left-handed appendages of the Festival. Lastly, the ball vanished also. The air of the seventies was not good for it, but that its demise was lamented by the county Misses I can well believe.

I never fail to wonder when comparing the Three Choir Festival of the present day with its predecessor of the early Victorian period. What a go-as-you-please affair the old "music-meeting" was, to be sure! In the matter of preparation it much resembled the militia, the use of both being

about on the line of the Scriptural warrior who "drew a bow at a venture." But that unaiming Hittite actually killed a king, while the Festival people murdered only music. Surely they must have murdered it, according to the standard by which musical achievements are now judged. They had as conductor a man who was in the rostrum, not because he could conduct, but because he happened to be organist of the cathedral in which the Festival was held. That is the case now, but there is far less risk, so much has the fundamental conception and practice of musical education changed. The chief duties of a conductor then were beating time, and occasionally uttering an exclamation. It used to be said of Sir George Smart that he reduced the fractions of his task in the exclamatory line to their least common denominator by crying only, "Piano, gentlemen, piano," and a very good cry too, for the old orchestra, though full of clever players, dearly loved a noise. The orchestra, brought down bodily from London, was always good in its way, but sometimes went out of its way to be bad. Can you wonder at it, seeing how often these metropolitan experts—men from the Opera and the Philharmonic—were put under a mere tyro or an ignoramus. Their duty, of course, was to do the best they could to make up for the defects of their chief; and often, when the man with the stick was modest as well as incapable, have I known them kindly conduct him, and pull him through respect-

ably. With the Three Choir conductors, Done (for years the *Times* printer—not the *Times* critic—called him Dove), Townsend Smith and Wesley, the orchestra was always on good terms. . . . Done was not, properly speaking, a conductor at all, but he was a gentle, amiable man, and the London players steered him through many a difficult passage. On his part, Smith, far the best conductor of the three, was recognised as such and followed; while Wesley, more distinctly a non-conductor than even Done, commanded respect by his high musicianship and his brilliant achievements as a composer and organist. With some others, both in town and country, the case was apt to be different.

During the reign of the practical joke—sceptre and crown have tumbled down in its case—the orchestra would sometimes squeeze amusement out of it. They were like boys at such diversions, and Festival time was really holiday time by comparison with the drudgery of opera and concert work in London through the months of spring and summer. Well, boys will be boys, and some are never anything else.

Musical critics were quite up to the standard of Festival sportiveness, under the leadership of Davison, whose father as a friend of the Prince Regent (also a confirmed practical joker) may have been, and, I should say undoubtedly was, qualified to engender the same spirit. But, whether Davison owed his ingenious jokes to heredity or not, he carried them out with zest.

Hill, the viola player in the early years of the Monday Popular Concerts, was the victim of one of the great critic's elaborate pesterings at a provincial Festival. It opened with a letter addressed to Hill at his London residence, and purporting to be written by a Mr Joab Gas. The letter stated that its writer was glad to hear that Hill had been engaged for the Festival (at Hereford, I think) as principal viola, that he (Mr Gas) would be in the neighbourhood at the same time, and would call upon him to discuss a matter of importance in which he (Mr Hill) would be greatly interested. On reaching his hotel in the Festival city, Hill was handed the card of Mr Joab Gas, and heard from the girl in the office that Gas regretted to find that Mr Hill had not arrived. He would call again. From the evidence of his cards, it appeared that Gas called at least once a day, but always when Hill was engaged on the orchestra. The poor viola chief was much puzzled as to the meaning of his assiduous yet most unlucky visitor, and became somewhat concerned when yet another of the Gas cards was passed to him on the orchestra, bearing a pencilled inscription, "Most important, must see you now. Cannot you come outside for a minute or two?" Hill, of course, could not move from his post, and when the concert ended there was no sign of Mr Gas anywhere. Next day came the final stage of the process. Wandering from hotel to hotel in the morning with inquiries for Gas, Hill was arrested by a peal from the public crier's bell,

and stopped to hear the announcement it preluded, which was, in effect, that Mr Joab Gas, being about to leave the city, would await Mr Hill at the west door of the cathedral after the morning performance. Astonished and confounded, Hill looked vaguely about in search of he knew not what, till he espied Davison (with him C. L. Grüneison) smiling very audibly indeed on the other side of the broad street. There were explanations, and Hill was a placable man.

A day or two before another provincial festival, the superintendent of police received two visitors in his office, one of whom, a very pleasant gentleman though somewhat lame, informed him, as a measure of precaution, that among the visitors to the festival was a friend of his own, who, while usually quiet and harmless, was subject to violent outbreaks in which, if not restrained, he might hurt himself or others. He suggested that a constable in private clothes should be told off to "shadow" his friend when outside the hotel, taking special pains to avoid attracting attention. The superintendent was sympathetic, asked for the cards of his visitors and a description of the explosive friend, which receiving, he begged to assure the lame gentleman that Mr—— would be duly watched, and no one would suspect the supervision.

For a couple of days or so the shadowing was quite a success, but the victim presently became conscious that something was wrong, he hardly knew what. At last it dawned upon him that, for

a reason not to be guessed, he was shadowed. To test the matter, he began exploring the less frequented parts of the city, especially the long straight roads, where, at length, he discovered his man, now some little distance in rear, and again level with him on the opposite side of the way, but always moving as a curious tourist like himself. At last he took action. Turning right about sharply, as the active and intelligent one strolled along behind, he cried :—

“What the devil do you mean by following me wherever I go?”

“It’s all right, sir. Pray don’t excite yourself. Keep cool, sir, keep cool.”

“That’s not an answer to my question. What’s your game, fellow? Reply, or I’ll call the police.”

“Then call me, sir, I am a policeman.”

“Oh, that’s it, eh? Take me to the station at once. This must be seen to.”

And seen to it was, the superintendent producing the cards of his two visitors, and relating what had been done at the instance of the Pleasant Gentleman. It was, of course, the Pleasant Gentleman who soothed the irritated nerves of police and victim, and left the station amid a chorus of laughter. By the way, the victim was a musical critic, the same who, at Norwich, began his first festival article with “Walking about the streets of this ancient city, I noted the following points of interest,” and then continued with several pages of an out-of-date guide-book.

I have given the foregoing stories as they were related to me by the principal actor in them ; but in later years the Pleasant Gentleman launched his practical jokes in my presence, and, occasionally with my assistance. But these were of a milder type, and as harmless as a drop of dew, being followed neither by tears nor tremors.

I cannot say that the musical critics at provincial festivals were precisely a band of brothers. But there were no cliques among them, and when they differed so far as to show signs of hostility it was for purely personal reasons. They were, of course, sensitive, and prone to take offence when none was intended, but on the whole they lived in peace. This applies to the metropolitan critics, with very few exceptions, such as, for instance, Henry Chorley, who hated Davison and ignored all the rest. Among the rest, at one time, was Charles Lamb Kenney ; and he, having noted Chorley's peculiar taste in dress, won fame by saying " Everything is red about him but his books." Of the provincial men I knew nothing, the haughty metropolitan idea being that they were persons whose principal avocation lay in reporting coroner's inquests and police court proceedings.

This, doubtless, was nonsense, but like Mercurio's wound, it served. Occasionally, the country critics, whose jealousy of their town brethren was a fixed quantity, took fire at their lofty London utterances, and retaliated briskly. One such occasion came about at Gloucester where was, and, I

am glad to say, still is, an able weekly, the *Gloucester Journal*, then owned and edited by Thomas H. Chance. At a festival in the cathedral city, the Londoners were so far aggressive as to excite the wrath of the local press, and stimulate the *Journal* to hit back with all its might. Chance's "leader" was such an excellent thing of its kind that those at whom it struck were delighted. We forgot the purpose of the writer in admiration of his skill, and Davison proposed his health.

Considering the general good feeling among London critics, it may seem strange that they scattered among the hotels in festival cities, instead of housing together. That was due to considerations of expense, but Davison's hotel was regarded as in some sort the headquarters of the metropolitan critics, whose calls upon their acknowledged chief were not infrequent. There were other callers, by no means so welcome. These were, for the most part, London professors of music addicted to composition, and anxious to submit their works to critics of judgment and influence, such as they were sure to find in attendance on a festival. Davison, of course, was the desire of their eyes, being *The Times*, and he was the most difficult to approach. They might, it is true, have found him at the "Albion" almost any night at eleven o'clock, but they wanted to play their works to him, and the presence of a pianoforte was needful. At his home he was unapproachable, such was the vigilance of the



strong-faced old housekeeper, whose formula, in the way of answering callers, comprised only two short sentences, "Mister Davison is hout," and "Mister Davison is abed." These answered all purposes, and few there were who passed whichever barrier of the two that aged lady chose to set up.

In an hotel aloofness could not be so preserved, and the professors of music, the artists, and the ambitious souls who dreamed of the bâton, were often successful in gaining an audience. They were always well treated; the composers, given a piano present, being sometimes permitted to play the work as to which they were especially anxious. But there was ever a desire to follow one piece with another, and make out of a little liberty a big recital. Oh, the horror of this to a man weary with listening, satiated with music, and longing for peace, even at a festival. But there was no peace in the days of which I speak. Like Joey Ladle, with ordinary beverage, the critic took the wine of music in at the pores, and often it did not exhilarate.

The hotels used by Davison, Grüneison and myself for many years, were, at Norwich, the Castle; at Birmingham, the Queen's; at Gloucester, the ancient building which started, in the fifteenth century, as the New Inn, and still bears that name, supplemented by the august but unnecessary word, "Hotel"; at Worcester, the Crown; and at Hereford, the Greyhound. All

these houses are still interesting to me, through many recollections of pleasant intercourse, or clash of hostile arguments, or peaceful discussion of principles regarded as lofty and becoming to serious men. But I must admit that we were not often serious, save when pen in hand.

Davison was Perpetual Jester to our little company of three, and after him laboured Grüneison, in more ponderous fashion. Our common sitting-room at Norwich looked upon the Castle, which was then used as a prison, and still remains associated with memories of James Rush, the notorious assassin of the Jermyn family. Before conviction, Rush's meals were prepared in our hotel, and sent into the prison, where he lay in full assurance of escape from the hangman's rope. This was enough for Grüneison. Assuming the existence of a tender feeling for Rush in the bosom of our buxom but quite mature waitress, Anne, Grüneison would cry as she entered the room: "Here she comes with a rush." Then would Anne, who had had triennial experience of the small joke, exclaim, "Don't, Mr Grüneison, find something newer to tease me with." "Very well, Anne," was the invariable reply, "we will drop the subject."

At the festivals of the Three Choirs we were more often four chums than three, for there would an amateur critic named Clemow join us. This person had made Davison's acquaintance in Gloucester, and by assiduity in the line of flattering

appreciation obtained leave to write reports of the festivals at the three cities in Davison's paper, the *Musical World*. For this service, he was paid travelling expenses, and had free quarters at the hotel. His labours were of small value, though they produced a great deal of snap and bounce, and Davison, but for his aversion from the disagreeable, would long before have brought the connection to a close. The chief's assistant, however, was a ready adviser in the commisariat department, though a little costly. Sitting down to our first dinner at a festival, Grüneison would say, "Well, what are we going to drink?" and Clemow would answer with a rich ring in his voice: "Oh, champagne of course, Bottle each." Davison's face always hardened at the familiar formula, but he said nothing, and I accepted the inevitable. On one occasion, however, the master-critic found his voice, and used it. Davison and I, at the close of a Norwich Festival, were due at Worcester, and proceeded to make our unaccustomed way across the Midland shires to the "Faithful City," having previously wired Clemow that we should arrive at the Crown about six o'clock. The journey was long and troublesome, and never were two men more ready for dinner on arrival than were we. Entering our sitting-room, we found no Clemow, nor were preparations for a meal in evidence. The bell was rung, and a maid appeared. "Is Mr Clemow in the hotel?" "Oh, no, sir, he has gone out to dinner." "Did he order dinner for us before leaving?" "Not that I know

of, sir, but I will inquire." She went away and returned with a negative. Then the wrath of the "Thunderer" broke forth, and the atmosphere of the cosy room associated with so many pleasant evenings became sulphurous. We had to put up with makeshift viands, and were taking in materials for a fine fit of indigestion, when Clemow stalked in, roseate, loud-voiced, and in high spirits. "Hullo, you boys," said he, "not much of a dinner before you! I have just dined with Tietjens." Davison laid down his knife and fork, and hurled at Clemow a mass of invective which was quite new in my experience of him. So to speak, it swept the offender off his legs, nay, it swept him out of the room, for Clemow, affrighted, made a rapid retreat, crying, "I shall go back to Tietjens." Davison's parting shot was, "Go to the devil, if you like." But Clemow turned up smiling next morning, and things went on as before. This I knew would be the case, the great critic's wrath being always as the crackling of thorns under a pot.

The relations between musical journalists and festival officials were not always friendly—a state of things which I attribute almost entirely to the wretched system of free press-tickets. The issue of gratuities—for such they are—to journalists I have always condemned as derogatory alike to giver and receiver, and as placing both in a false position. Acting upon this view of the matter, I have for years past refused to avail myself of the "free list." Tickets coming from a newspaper office were tant-

amount to an order which I was bound to carry out, but only on very rare occasions, and under special circumstances, have I applied for admission in the character of a "dead-head." The procedure is wholly unbusiness-like, and always does violence to the spirit of independence which should subsist, in every relation, between man and man. I recall the mortification I suffered when, little known as a critic, I had not seldom to find my own way into a theatre or concert-room because my proprietor, or my editor, was using the ticket himself. Even now, when I think of it, I am hot with shame because of the suspicious looks cast upon me, and the pointed questions thrown at me before the man in the box-office could satisfy himself of my identity. No critic, small or great, should be required to pass through such an ordeal. In the discharge of his duties he should be at least on an equality with his neighbours, who are there simply for pleasure. His principal should pay for him even as they, when not displaying show-boards, pay for themselves.

Do you ask how the free press-tickets affected the amenities between festival officials and festival reporters? The answer is that fifty years ago, and for a good while later, journalists who attended festivals in the provinces, and received free tickets, were not looked upon as gentlemen, albeit, when referred to as a body, they were sometimes styled "gentlemen of the press," that form being employed as a sort of compliment if toasts were

about. They may have been famous critics in London, but, generally speaking, the provincial mind recognised no difference between them and the newspaper men whose ordinary vocation it was to attend coroner's inquests, and make notes of police court proceedings. This was not all. Your festival official, in the long-past time to which I refer, appreciated in a wonderful manner his four days' brief authority, and exerted himself to the extent of unblushing impudence; without deliberate purpose, in many cases, I firmly believe, but simply because he thought it the proper course to take with a journalist. I remember how, on one occasion, I walked to a certain cathedral, rather carefully "made up" for the part of a gentleman, and was received by a local magnate, acting as steward, with pleasant smiles and a friendly mien. I showed him my ticket, which was prominently marked "Press," and, alas! the smiles vanished, and the bearing became stiff and hard as, waving his hand, he cried "Pass up." I did not blame the poor man, because there was the question whether he knew any better, and likewise was there the fact, avowed on the ticket, that I had entered as a mere dead-head.

From dignified stewards to the young gentlemen who inspect tickets at the doors is, no doubt, a descent, but it brings little change of atmosphere. When I first knew the Birmingham Festival, these officials made themselves specially obnoxious to the critics, and, more than once, I

turned upon them sharply in the columns of the paper I represented, but not with much result. I never think of this matter without calling to mind a story often told by Vernon Rigby, himself a Birmingham man. According to the once popular tenor, a person entered the bar of a public house where he was well known, and asked the presiding lady, "Any one in the bar parlour?" "Only Mr Jones," answered the lady, "and a Birmingham gentleman." "A Birmingham *gentleman*!" exclaimed the new-comer; "I'll certainly go and see him." The little story has no application now to the festival officials in the Midland city, these being all that the most sensitive press-man could desire.

There is something to be said on the other side, but the race of musical critics has vastly improved within the last fifty years. Here let me tell of an occurrence which would hardly be possible now. On the occasion of a concert in the old monastic refectory at Worcester, a well known critic, who had arrived late, lingered in the vestibule instead of passing on. He talked as he lingered, and presently one of the cathedral clergy, an old friend of mine and a most amiable man, gently offered to show the dawdler to his seat. Instead of thanks came a torrent of reproaches. The critic would not be dictated to by canons, or deans, or bishops, or by all of them put together. He would go to his seat when he pleased, and just then preferred to stay where

he was. Meanwhile, what was this Festival? Did the canon know that the London journalists kept it alive by making it a national instead of a local institution? and especially did he know that if the London men were to ignore it all Worcestershire could not save the Festival from extinction. Before this hail of words the canon wisely beat a retreat, and the storm soon blew over. But it was not pleasant while it lasted.

A great change has come over Festival artists within the last half century in regard to their nationality. Fifty years ago the policy of managers was to engage as many operatic "stars" as their means allowed, and some festivals, notably those held in comparatively small towns, such as Reading and Stony Stratford, drew their vitality from foreign talent. The English singers were, in these cases, of secondary importance. In 1846, and in Birmingham too, the managers did not venture to produce "Elijah" without adding to the programme a group of operatic pieces, performed by eminent aliens, Grisi and Mario among them. Even Mendelssohn's great oratorio was given with foreign help in the solo department, Staudigl, for example, creating the rôle of the Prophet. Now what do we see? Wagner's music apart, no one expects to find operatic pieces in a Festival programme, and with these have vanished the great lights of the lyric stage. When taken in all its length and breadth, the change is immensely impressive, while those who have watched its development can only



speak of it as wonderful. Yet the revolution worked itself out very quietly, and is attributable to causes by no means recondite.

Within the period covered by this survey, and more especially at its beginning, Michael Costa and Julius Benedict divided, unequally, the work of conducting festivals in Great Britain ; the Italian having charge at Birmingham, at the Crystal Palace (Handel Festival), and, later, at Glasgow and Leeds, while Benedict confined himself to Norwich, as, by the way, Halle did to Bristol. Still later, August Manns, aforetime not permitted to stray from Sydenham, appeared on the scene, and for a while acted as conductor at Sheffield. All these men were foreigners ! I would gladly suppress the fact, but it must come out, and with it an admission that if other nations refuse to recognise us as a musical people, the act is justified by our defects. Fancy, among all the millions of Britons, not one whom a festival committee could, or at any rate would, invite to conduct their concerts ! Well, we have to some extent wiped away that shame. Although a German reigns at Birmingham, there is an Englishman (Riseley) at Bristol, and an Irishman (Stanford) at Leeds ; another Englishman (Wood) has charge at Norwich, and a British subject, born in Jamaica, educated in England (Cowen), presides at Cardiff. How is that for change ? It is a "turn-over" as great in its way as the revolution which has placed native singers where foreigners once reigned as by un-

disputed right. I have not named the conductors of the Three Choir Festivals, because they are conductors *ex officio*, and as such do not clearly come into the argument. All the same they are good men and true.

Among the conductors who occasionally appeared at Festivals were Walter Macfarren and G. W. Cusins, Queen Victoria's "Master of the Musick." Walter Macfarren acted as deputy for his brother George; Cusins doing the same for Sterndale Bennett. But neither got into running for the post of conductor-in-chief, failing as much on account of the supreme claims of Costa as because wanting in capacity reasonably comparable with his. The choral works produced with the aid of these substitutes were respectively first heard at Birmingham (Bennett's "Woman of Samaria"), Bristol (Macfarren's "St John the Baptist"), and Leeds (Macfarren's "Resurrection," "Joseph," and "King David"). Inasmuch as Costa was conductor-in-chief at Birmingham and Leeds, it may be asked why help from outside was deemed necessary. The answer is that Costa had no relish for English works after the unpleasant quarrel with Sterndale Bennett in 1862. It is generally believed that he never touched Bennett's music in public again, but, as a matter of fact, he conducted a work by the English master at a Philharmonic concert, years after the quarrel. This Bennett himself states in a letter to me. Alberto Randegger, who succeeded Benedict at

Norwich in 1881, did admirable service to the East Anglian Festival, raising it from the low level to which it had dropped under the old and weary man-of-all-work who preceded him. Another labourer in the festival field was Wilhelm Kuhe, who, with remarkable enterprise and spirit, himself established a festival at Brighton and kept it alive during many years; acting throughout as joint conductor with Fred. Kingsbury and also as solo pianist.

Against the array of foreigners mentioned above, I have very little to put to the credit of England, whose strength with the bâton was but weakness. It was confined, for example, to the three cathedral cities which then, alone among their kind, supported a cathedral festival, and was represented, as already stated, by Dr S. S. Wesley (Gloucester), William Done (Worcester), and Townsend Smith (Hereford). Of Wesley as a conductor, I have already said enough, and Done, good, amiable man, was as feebly built as a suburban villa, but Smith had strength. The orchestra would follow him without any sense of risk; he knew what he wanted, and, generally, how to get it—a state of things highly valued because singularly rare. I shall not enlarge upon this, because I wish to speak of the Hereford organist more as a reformer of his festival than as a wielder of the terrible instrument which had then come to be identified with incompetence, and was scarcely libelled.

Smith was the first of the Three Choir conductors to give an evening performance of oratorio in the cathedral. Before this change, and during more years than could well be counted, it had been an unvarying custom to give four morning performances of sacred music in the cathedral, and three concerts of secular works in the Shire Hall, with, at Hereford, an "epilogue" of chamber music in the College Hall, on the fourth evening. I may be told that this was a fair division, and, from a numerical point of view, so it was. But the secular concerts were never regarded as belonging to the festival in the same measure as those devoted to oratorio. They had, many people thought, some sort of affinity with the festival ball, and with the races of an earlier day, all being in the nature of extras. No doubt this went far to encourage Townsend Smith in his desire to wrest one evening concert from the grasp of the secular, and hand it over to the sacred. The clergy naturally supported him when the matter was put to the test, and, though there were, no less naturally, some objectors among the slow-moving country gentlemen who qualified as stewards, Smith carried his point. The first step, so easily taken, was followed by others, and now, in each of the three cities, secular music has but one concert; and that, there is good reason to believe, holds its ground because the ladies cannot part with their sole opportunity of displaying "festival novelties" in the way of dress. Townsend Smith

lived long enough to see the change well established, and he was increasingly proud of it as time passed. But he did more than this.

In view of the festival of 1870, the organist-conductor had it in mind to play an orchestral symphony as part of an evening concert in the cathedral. But choice of a work suitable to the place and occasion was a very important matter; the risk being of giving offence to the clergy, and failing to win the approval of a body of stewards which looked upon all change with suspicion. Fortunately, Townsend Smith, who knew how to temper boldness with caution, had in his mind a symphony which, of all works in the same class, was least likely to call forth opposition. The reference is to Mendelssohn's "Reformation," which was comparatively new (in print) at the time, which appealed to the Protestant spirit, and celebrated one of the greatest movements known to religious history. This was proposed, adopted, and performed; thus setting up a precedent speedily followed at Worcester and Gloucester, and now an established rule in each city.

Commenting on these changes in 1873, I said, "Mr Smith is one of a thousand. While doing everything, he always seems to have time for more, and with many irons in the fire he never suffers one to burn." Smith was not only conductor at Hereford, but secretary, and, in effect, general manager also, yet never did anything go amiss, because he contrived to do most things himself.

I can give an instance of his energy and alertness. After conducting a long morning performance it was not his custom to sink into an easy chair, crying, like the despairing lover in "Solomon's Song": "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with pomegranates." Rather would he make up his returns of attendance and collections, then himself starting out to leave copies at the hotels where musical critics were lodging. We always looked for Townsend Smith within an hour of his laying down the bâton; and he, with his zeal and devotion to duty, never failed us.

When I call up—from the dead mostly—the Festival artists of forty years, I am struck with the fact that, through a large part of the time, a few principal figures are seen, steadfast at their post, and holding their own against all challengers. Here are the names of some among these perennial artists, who kept the favour of the public till it suited them to retire, or till death called them home—Tietjens, Lemmens-Sherrington, Rudersdorff, Sainton-Dolby, Patey, Trebelli, Sims Reeves, Cummings, Maas, Weiss, Rigby, Lloyd, Lewis Thomas, Foli and Santley. Of these only two or three remain unto this day, and only one, the veteran last-named, is still in the service of his art as singer. There were, of course, many others, whom it is a pleasure to recall from the abyss of the past, because while less eminent than those already named, they were hardly less serviceable in their way. But the Old Guard, upon whom the issue

of many an enterprise depended, were those again "lined up" above. Albani came later than her soprano sisters in this gallant and fortunate band, and as I write she is probably about to retire, but the French-Canadian artist will leave behind her, whenever she withdraws, a famous name, a record of distinguished service, graven deep in the musical history of our land. This, notwithstanding her inability always to forget, on the festival platform, the airs and graces, the tricks and manners, of the operatic prima-donna.

But far more important than the servants of Festival art is the art itself as represented by the works performed. I contemplate very many of these with a good deal of sadness—with the feeling evoked by tiny graves in neglected corners of a country churchyard. Music, too, has its graves, the place of which is rarely marked by headstones ; and in reminiscent moments I walk through long avenues of these, calling up recollections of some, and wondering that I have forgotten the story of so many more. These avenues are indeed worse than graveyards, which, at least, speak of resurrection, and answer the cry, "Watchman, what of the night?" with the comfortable words, "The night is departing," whereas to the musical dead there is left no hope.

I am not going to talk here of a "Massacre of the Innocents," for, sooth to say, some of the younglings which perished were but feeble reminiscences of better things ; and others, again, called

for an advocate to justify even the beginning of an existence. But while the procession of the still-born and the short-lived paced mournfully on, the spirit of change passed over the scene, with new models, new purposes, new methods, and principles which allowed those who held them to preach foul scorn of works that till then had everywhere been held in honour. All this was mistaken by youth and inexperience for progress, which it was only in slight measure, the bulk being merely an extravagance of the wayward in art. When I compare a festival programme representing the earlier decades of my "forty years" with one of like authority belonging to the immediate past, I note a fact of which those should take heed who would sweep the past out of history and remembrance, and give to music a primary basis of their own imaginings, so that it might be said with Dryden :—

"Former things  
Are set aside like abdicated Kings,  
And every moment alters what is done,  
And innovates some act till then unknown."

I do not deny that much music of the past is now neglected, if not forgotten, and I am equally willing to admit that there are works which, having served their immediate purpose, are better put aside as fit for nothing else ; but, and this is the fact to be noted—the latest festival programme pays homage to the past, and there are festivals which, but for the works of the past, would die. After



all, why do we speak of past and present when in the temples of great art? Such distinctions exist not where dwell the lovely spirits that take no note of time, but live on everlastingly. You cannot destroy them. They are deathless principles, which, if you tried them with fire, would remain unconsumed, like the heart of Shelley on the Italian shore.

## CHAPTER XVI

### CHORAL AND ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS

Mendelssohn's "Reformation" Symphony—Not a masterpiece—Appointment of W. G. Cusins as Philharmonic conductor—A surprise for his detractors—Sacred Harmonic Society—Incidents of its career—Costa and Bach—The Society's downfall—Costa and noisy instruments—Crystal Palace music—The Saturday concerts—Some of their habitués—The critics' gallery and an observant public—Schubert, a prime favourite—Handel festivals—Robert Bowley—Henry Leslie's choir—Leslie as conductor—His unwise ambition—The popular concerts—Arthur Chappell and his artists—Prosper Sainton delighted—Decline of the "Pops"—Busy general work in the sixties.

**M**Y recollections in this branch of the art are a huge crowd, for in England it is the most active, the most diversified, and the most fertile in results bearing upon music as a whole. I venture to think, moreover, that it stands first in point of importance, as indicating not only the taste of the great public, but also the measure in which taste has developed with regard to the forms that concert-music assumes. My experience in this department, as I hardly need say, has very largely been gained in London, and I am quite ready to confess that the metropolis is not the best school. It is too cosmopolitan to be a trustworthy criterion of things English, especially when they are things of art, as to which the

strangers within our gates consider themselves supremely qualified to speak. That strangers do exercise a potent influence upon music in London is beyond question, and its measure is all the greater, because in the foreigner there is very little of the diffidence which marks the typical British amateur. For this some allowance must be made when coming to a conclusion in which both parties are concerned.

The present retrospect begins in November 1867, when it became known that Mendelssohn's "Reformation" symphony would be produced at the Crystal Palace, for the first time in England. That work was heard a second time in St James's Hall, three weeks later, under Joseph Barnby, but I had discussed it in the *Pall Mall Gazette* two months before the Crystal Palace echoed to its strains. I have just read the article I then wrote, and have found much in it that I am unable now to approve. The reader, of course, knows that Mendelssohn, for reasons connected with "law and order," withheld it from the public, and it was not published till twenty years after his death. Commenting upon the publication, I said :—

“ We must all be glad that the composer's executors have at length made up their minds to give this and other of his musical remains to the world. The art will be enriched in consequence, and the tantalising suspense of amateurs in every country will be ended. It does not appear, however, that

those to whom the great master entrusted his MSS. have shown themselves consistent in the course they have adopted. If the 'Reformation' Symphony and its companion works deserved to be kept from the public at all, they must have deserved to be so kept altogether. As it is, one can only find a principle for the executors by supposing they sentenced each composition to so many years' seclusion in expiation of its particular faults."

No one, I take it, will deny my right to correct myself, and to say that though the foregoing quotation may not be altogether nonsense, it is smashed and pulverised by the fact that it was Mendelssohn who withdrew the Symphony and never consented to its publication. His judgment should have been respected at any cost. What! is a composer to have no control over the works by which he will be represented to posterity? The thing is absurd. And what has come of the executors' action? The fact that a Symphony of Mendelssohn's burdens the shelves of its publishers, and adds nothing whatever to his reputation. Its composer was right when he suppressed it, and his friends were wrong when they revived it. I was not in this way of thinking, nor were many of my contemporaries, forty years ago. At that time, I said :—

"The composer's executors have done his genius wrong by withholding so great a masterpiece for twenty years."

Nothing of the kind. The wrong was as I have already defined it, and the Symphony is not a masterpiece. How stern and unyielding should be the control of inexperienced musical critics over their impulses!

Another stirring event of 1867 was the appointment of a successor to Sterndale Bennett at the head of the Philharmonic orchestra. The post had been held by Bennett for eleven years, and the vacancy excited much interest as to a successor, the more because the *Times* had stated that the directors would appoint none but a countryman of their own. The Englishman at that period generally regarded as "in the running" for the post was Alfred Mellon, conductor of the Musical Society of London. All other (in fact or fancy) qualified men—Benedict, Halle, Arditi, Manns—were foreigners and not eligible. Under these very restricted conditions the directors proceeded to election, and chose W. G. Cusins, a professor of music, regarding whose powers as an orchestral chief little was known. Those who were not sad on account of this choice were certainly merry, and used it as food for laughter; while some were surprised and others were not; the "others" being made up of all who remembered that Cusins, like the third Napoleon, was "the nephew of his uncle." The uncle in this case was George Frederic Anderson, a powerful man in the councils of the Philharmonic, and conductor of the Queen's private band. ✓

The point of the story lies in the fact that Cusins proved to be a quite respectable conductor. No claim to distinction can be advanced for him in that capacity, but there were few complaints, and he held his post through sixteen years. I was among the first to recognise the good that was in him. Writing in the first year of his appointment, I said :—

“He is well known in the musical world as a thorough musician, accomplished in many ways, and all who wish well to the Society will hope that he may prove equal to the responsible task which he has undertaken. . . . Up to the present moment, the new conductor may be congratulated upon a fair success.”

But Cusins's measure of success does not excuse the haphazard conduct of the directors, which, however, the musical public condoned with the old formula, “Not guilty, but don't do it again.”

Choral music of a religious character, but outside the church, was, in 1867, chiefly under the care of the Sacred Harmonic Society, then, as it was fondly thought, permanently settled in Exeter Hall. Among the leading men of this great artistic association was Robert Bowley, general manager of the Crystal Palace, and one of the founders of the Handel Festival. I have already mentioned him as the hero of George Groves's “multum in parvo” story.

The Sacred Harmonic Society left many foot-

prints on the sands of time. It trod firmly, and its marks are still deep. The reason is that it had shrewd and devoted managers, men of business most of them, and not easily turned aside from their chosen path. There are not many such bodies now, for this is the day of paid agents, to whom nobody looks for special devotion to the cause of music, so many claims being made by zeal for other interests. When the Society's five hundredth concert was given in 1868, Bowley, who was treasurer, issued a pamphlet, entitled, "Thirty-five Years' Retrospect," and by it made known to the world a case of astonishing success.

In the second year (1833) of the Society's existence it had a roll of thirty-one members. That was the day of small things, which we are instructed not to despise. In 1868 the small things had grown large indeed. The Society then had nearly £5000 in the funds, and other property of almost equal value. It had a library (now belonging to the Royal College of Music), the catalogue of which ran to 320 pages, and a benevolent fund of £3000. We can show nothing like this now. Indeed, musical associations akin to what this dead Society was in life are scarcely able to make both ends meet. How can this be explained? Only, in my opinion, by crediting with enormous strength the changed conditions under which concert-giving is now carried on. It must be remembered that in the days of the

Sacred Harmonic Society managers of choral bodies had an easy time in the matter of programmes, especially after Mendelssohn's death. There were no frantic cries for new works in that day, and, if any demands were heard, they were set down to musical critics, who, as I was once told, required something to "justify their existence." Critics were, of course, "dead-heads," and the public, who paid, were quite satisfied to hear the few works represented by "Messiah," "Elijah," and "The Creation." Under these conditions the course of the Exeter Hall concerts was all plain sailing.

Long before a change in the somnolent state of the musical public so declared itself as to attract attention there were sporadic cases of waking up. I recall a rather late one, in which Bach's "Passion" was concerned. A Bach revival had set in, fostered by Joseph Barnby, and strongly supported by the more serious souls among the cognoscenti. It was the plain duty of the Sacred Harmonic Society to take note, and it was the difficulty of that body to make Costa move to the same end. The redoubtable Neapolitan and the tremendous German were each at the antipodes of the other, and Costa set his face against going over. He did not mind producing such novelties as Crotch's "Palestine," by way of compliment to the *genus loci*, and a concert version of Rossini's "Moïse" delighted his Italian preferences. With at least equal



favour, it may be assumed, he consented to an occasional performance of his own oratorios, "Eli" and "Naaman." But Bach puzzled him. The stern disciplinarian of the orchestra knew, however, when to obey authority, and he at last consented to Bach. I was told at the time that he said, "They want Bach, do they? They shall have him." We did have him—all of him. Not a note of the music would Costa leave out, being as firm for integrity as Richter when Wagner is in question, though for a very different reason.

I attended that very conscientious performance, and knew not whether to laugh or weep as it went on. There was comedy in the scene; Costa, calm, relentless, no doubt suffering, but absolutely unaffected; the great chorus, anxious, wondering what would be the end, and the huge audience melting away at ever increasing speed. Even the devotion of the Clapham nonconformists could not endure the complete Bach. They also girded up their loins and fled. When I left, Costa, calm as ever, was still waving his bâton, and the chorus, weary and worn, were singing with less than half a heart. I was told that very few people were in the hall when the last chord sounded, and that Costa bowed to them with his usual air of stately condescension before marching off the platform with steady, unhurried step.

When the Bach concert was given the Sacred Harmonic Society was at the summit of its

fortunes. Then the descent began ; successive stages taking the old association remorselessly down the well-trodden slope which leads to nothingness. Its course was painfully watched by thousands of sympathisers. First came the loss of Exeter Hall under pressure from the proprietors ; next, the removal to St James's Hall, where the Society and the remains of its great executive force were hopelessly out of place ; next, the loss of Costa ; and, last, the attempt, doomed from the outset, to carry on without him. Nobody could supply Costa's place under the conditions of the time, and it is not to be wondered at that even William H. Cummings failed. So ended the Sacred Harmonic. It had done its work, and it rested from its labours according to the universal law.

My thoughts often go back to the story of this Society, in part, may be, because my relations with its managers were not such as usually exist between the critic and those upon whom he sits in judgment. I remember being much impressed by the liberal spirit in which the managers treated me as a passive claimant for the "privileges of the press." I made no application, always having command of one of the seats allotted to Davison, but presently I was courteously informed that a whole bench of seven places was at our disposal. Davison to take four and myself three. A most pleasant contrast this, to some earlier experiences that still rankle in my memory.

Costa's array of noisy wind instruments I cannot forget. Here let me say that for some reason, primary and elemental, the performances of the Sacred Harmonic Society were regarded by me as impressive, on account of their noise. I liked to be filled with music, to have it sweep down upon me like an avalanche, and carry me away with its thunders. I suppose that at a certain stage—an early one mostly—in the development of a musical individual he is always thus afflicted. The disease does not trouble me now; many years having elapsed since I became convalescent, and passed on to higher things in art than those beloved by Nebuchadnezzar. But Costa could not get rid of his affliction. He remained to the end a noisy musician, and trombones were more dear to him than any other instruments in the orchestra. They were but three, but he valued them, I am sure, above the "sixteen double-basses" so persistently advertised by the Society's managers. The trombones were well supported by an ophicleide, long in the hands of Phasey, most stalwart and large-lunged of Costa's men, and there were always, high up among the men-singers, two "serpents," which led the attack in that exalted region. For old acquaintance sake I was much interested in those serpents, although I knew that Handel had remarked of their kind: "They are not the serpents which seduced Eve." The reason is, that when, as a boy, I played the violin in the gallery of a village church, a serpent

had place next to me, and emitted the most appalling sounds that ever pretended to be music. Wherefore I wondered when I saw a pair in Exeter Hall, where, rightly, sounds infernal had no place. I wonder, now, what has become of those instruments, also of the performers who blew into them, and at moments enabled me to realise what Charles Lamb called "The measured malice of music."

"So swells each windpipe ; ass intones to ass,  
Harmonic twang of leather, horn and brass."

But there are some of us of whom it may be said :—

"If Nature thundered in his opening ears,  
And stunned him with the music of the spheres,  
How would he wish that heaven had left him still  
The whisp'ring zephyr and the purling rill."

I could fill a volume with reminiscences of music on Sydenham Hill, from the production of Sullivan's only Symphony, early in 1865, to the death of August Manns, forty years later. But one must go back a long way thoroughly to understand what a boon the Saturday concerts were to amateurs who hungered and thirsted after better things than could be found in town. Orchestral concerts in London through the winter were like the proverbial visits of angels. They occurred but seldom, and, then, chiefly for the convenience of some solo instrumentalist who needed accompaniment. This state of things sufficiently accounted for the Saturday rushes to

Sydenham, not only of cultivated amateurs, but of professionals also. As for the critics, the whole army—nay, we were not an army then—the whole band moved upon the southern height as regularly as some of them frequented the Albion Tavern or the Edinburgh Castle.

All that was great in the London musical world might have been seen at Victoria Station on the winter Saturdays, as the special trains were backing to the departure platforms. It was a goodly crowd, however looked at, but not so voluble or so loud in speech as similar gatherings in these later days, when everybody thinks he shall be heard for his noise of tongue. But they talked music, and in 1867-8 principally Schubert, who then was, for the first time, shining in all the glory of his heaven-descended art. It was not a company of many opinions, but a band of worshippers, having one faith and one soul. And it was good to be among and of them.

Before the concert a gathering of critics might be seen at one of the bars facing the music room at the Palace. This, however, was a sectional assembly; those chiefly who cultivated J. W. Davison, and picked his brains when they were fruitful, as mostly they were.

These are all before me, each in his habit as he lived, while I now write, but Henry F. Chorley stands not among them, which is fortunate—for him, or he would have been chaffed out of his life. Nor do I see Grüneison, who may be busy

at the office of the Conservative Land Society ; nor Campbell Clarke, whose successor I became in the service of the *Daily Telegraph* ; nor Henry Lincoln, who avoids the company of his kind lest they should filch his ideas. But Sutherland Edwards is with Davison, and so are, besides the present unworthy writer, Desmond Ryan, a few aspirants connected with the smaller journals, and a group of outsiders who refused neither Davison's liberal drinks nor his still more profuse jokes.

"Tom" Mudie never failed these Saturday gatherings. He was a brother of the famous librarian, and, back in what now to us seems a very remote past, became one of the first pupils of the R.A.M. Mudie was a clever composer of refined orchestral music, as well as of songs, and for years held a post in the household of Lord Monson, similar to that filled by Haydn with the Esterhazys. Occasionally one of his overtures was performed at the New Philharmonic Concerts, but these revivals were, I fear, more painful than pleasing to the poor composer, who was wont to say that the age had gone past his works, and left them stranded on a mud-flat. Mudie had a sort of bear-leader in an organist and occasional composer named Taylor. They were much together at one period of their lives, and in their death they were not far divided. Durlacher, of the Sacred Harmonic Society, would sometimes join our company. He was one of the Saturday "regulars," and never failed to win a welcome.

Now and then, too, John Goss would pass our corner of the bar, and be summoned by Davison to stop and join good company. But the old organist lived at Brixton, and feared lest some Brixtonian should see him and make talk in the suburb. Well, most of us know what suburbs are, and how tongues wag when the clergyman or minister pays a call. It saddens me to think that of all who made up our group at the bar, I am, to the best of my belief, the only survivor. The rest have gone, but, while it was possible, they were never wanting in respect for the old motto: *Dum vivimus, vivamus*.

My reminiscences of the Crystal Palace forty years ago would be most incomplete were I to leave unnoticed the so-called "critics' gallery," which, I suppose, everybody still knows as the gallery facing the orchestra. The critics' gallery was isolated by barriers, and had but two entrances, each watched over by a single attendant. There were two wings divided by the entrance passage, and these were invariably occupied by press men, visitors of distinction, friends of the directors, and managers, etc. We were, as a body, supposed to know much with respect to the quality of the works performed, and the manner of their rendering. So, at the close of a piece, it was amusing to see how the visitors in other galleries were "all eyes" for our demeanour, and with what interest they, while themselves applauding, observed the demonstrations made in the seats of the critics,

or, as they were sometimes called, the "seats of the scornful." Actually, the Biblical phrase did not apply to the benches we occupied. We were never scornful, but we were sometimes silent. "What a strange power there is in silence!" said Emerson.

I have already recalled the vogue of Schubert in 1867-8, when work after work, unheard before in this country, was produced at the Palace with loving care and received with fervent admiration. We were fortunate in those days, for it seemed to us that the shining glass-house at Sydenham had become the temple of a new and gracious gospel. Never to be forgotten by me at any rate was the first hearing of the "Unfinished Symphony," of the "Tragic Symphony," of the "Rosamunde" music, and other masterpieces just drawn from the dust and darkness of Dr Schneider's family cupboard. How the audience of connoisseurs gloated on this precious new music! And how blissfully George Grove, the discoverer for England, listened while his face shone even as the face of Moses when he came down from looking at the glory of the Eternal.

Let me recall, for more than simple mention, the first English performance of the "Tragic," which, as musical readers hardly need telling, was written in 1816, when Schubert was nineteen years old. Let me also, because what is set down under the impression of the moment is better than a time-



faded recollection, reproduce from my report in the *Pall Mall Gazette* some sentences which, on account of their subject, are worth reading again.

“As was the case with most of his great works, the ill-fated composer never heard the symphony performed, nor, in all probability, would any one else have had that pleasure—the original score having disappeared—but for a copy preserved, with other of his precious manuscripts, in the dusty cupboard of Schubert’s relative, Schneider. Only once did the Symphony come out of that inglorious retirement, two movements having been played at Vienna in 1860. But no impression was made by the music on that occasion, and Dr Schneider again consigned the Symphony to obscurity, probably inclined to doubt its value. . . . Although nothing positive can be known upon the matter, owing to the loss of the autograph score, the probability is that the title “Tragische” was given to the work by Schubert himself. In a note to the programme, Mr Grove states with truth that the title might be bestowed on almost everything he wrote, for there are few, even of his more cheerful works, in which a tone of melancholy does not pervade and underlie their gaiety. But the composer was conscious of genius, and full of the aspirations of youth, while bitterly chafing under an unworthy fate, and fighting against poverty dire enough to make him beg his brother for the price of a penny loaf and a few apples. Therefore it may be, as Mr Grove

suggests, that poor Schubert sat down in a more than commonly desponding mood to express in this work all the bitterness of his soul, penn'd a mournful Introduction, and then found his gloom disappear before 'a few Kreutzers that chance or kindness put in his way.' At any rate, there is little in the Symphony to account for its title after the Introduction has passed."

Even now Schubert is a wonder and a mystery to us all. Test the case by setting against his thirty-two years of life the long array of volumes which contain his works, and then refrain, if you can, from asking the old question: "Whence hath this man these things?" And what a theme "this man" was for the musical writers of forty years ago! The charm of his simple nature, the freshness and beauty of his music, and the mystery of his tragic life, drew our eyes to him brimming with tears of love and pity, and we could offer him naught but praise. But, after all, his greatest wonder is the mass of his works. Archbishop Trench held that nearly all poets of first rate excellence have been nearly as remarkable for the quantity as the quality of their compositions. "Witness the seventy dramas of Æschylus, the more than ninety of Euripides, the hundred-and-thirteen of Sophocles. And if we consider the few years during which Shakespeare wrote, his fruitfulness is extraordinary. The flow has been a large and copious one, and has streamed freely forth,

keeping itself free and clear by the very force of its constant ebullition. And the fact is quite explicable; it is not so much they that have spoken, as their nation that has spoken by them." These utterances apply to composers as well as poets, but in Schubert's case I should prefer to say that through him spoke a greater power than any nation.

At this time, and for many years after, the Crystal Palace concerts flourished as though nothing could extinguish, or even dim, the "vital spark" which burned within them. They stood firm as the Pyramids, and we never dreamed for them an evil time. Ah! if we had only known that the axe was drawing near to the root of the tree—that slowly, but surely, influences were working to bring down the fair fabric, and leave it as a ruin of its former self! Indeed the poet is right who sang:—

"Change and decay on all around I see."

But this cloud was not without a bright side, and what was dark at Sydenham had its cause in the growing light of London, where orchestral concerts multiplied, and amateurs were relieved of the disagreeable necessity of journeying on a transpentine railway.

Of Handel Festivals at the Crystal Palace I have memories, but I will now put only one into words. On those occasions, the magnificent Bowley had a kind of private box in the angle where the southern sweep of the vast orchestra touched the

nave. This little enclosure was comfortably furnished, and into it the General Manager sometimes invited his friends. On a certain Selection day, Davison and I were tendered Bowley's hospitality, while our host sat at a little table receiving frequent communications from his subordinates. After a time, Costa and his army plunged into a selection from "Solomon," and I saw that Bowley was becoming interested. He rolled his vast bulk (in a chair to match) so as to face the orchestra, took up a copy of the oratorio, and, for a while, silently followed the course of the music. Presently, as the choir basses were approaching their fine lead, "Live for ever, pious David's son," he turned his head, looked up imperiously at the basses, as though to say, "Now, you boys, remember, I am with you," then inflated, as it seemed to me, his whole body, and burst into song. Over his head and around him rolled the choral thunders, but Bowley's ponderous voice tore its way through, and Costa, down below us, heard, for I noticed that, whilst his inscrutable face remained as calm as the countenance of a sphinx in a sand-storm, the eyebrows crinkled, and the skin of the forehead rose and fell with flash-light quickness. No doubt that, inside, he was shaking with laughter. But Bowley, the old Sacred Harmonic man, who knew his Handel backward, kept on to the end of the chorus, then sinking into his chair with streaming brow.

Amateurs, who remember Henry Leslie's Con-

certs in their best days, are now, I fear, a fast diminishing number. As far back as 1868 their best days had passed, Leslie having then enlarged his enterprise so as to take in orchestral and choral works. His ambition was natural enough, but it had a distressful effect upon his mixed choir, which he had trained to excel in madrigals and part-songs. Taste for the masterpieces of a fine old vocal school seems at present almost entirely decayed, in London, at any rate; but forty years ago it had not died out, being, indeed, largely nourished by Leslie and his choir, whose performances were of special distinction, and greatly enjoyed. The singers were picked people; a marked *esprit de corps* bound them all together in their struggles towards pre-eminence, and they submitted absolutely to the laws of discipline. Leslie, or, if he were not that officer, the choir-master, must have been an efficient trainer, for there were times when the distance between his singers and perfection seemed easily measurable. I recall as examples of excellence in this high degree the rendering of Mendelssohn's "Judge me, O God"; and, with organ accompaniment, the same composer's lovely "Hear my prayer." To hear these works, and many others, was a pure delight; but Leslie, after a time, aimed at what he, no doubt, deemed to be higher things. In this step, and as a conductor, he went beyond his limits, and lost himself.

Leslie's treatment of the madrigals and part-songs was sometimes a matter of complaint. It

was said that he so overloaded the music with marks of expression as to make the resultant effect mechanical, and that upon devices of this sort his idea of expression was based, instead of upon subtler means, directed to the cultivation of mental insight and emotional sensibility. Much of this was true, and it must be added that Leslie was not an imposing conductor. He stood stiffly at his post, and limited his suggestions of feeling to the loud swish of his bâton as it sharply descended. Sometimes the bâton would strike the desk, but some people supposed this was the result, not of purpose, but of keeping his eyes upon his book.

It may be easily imagined that Leslie was not impeccable in his direction of works requiring an orchestra for their due performance. But, at all events, he aimed high. In 1868 he presented the "Reformation" Symphony, Beethoven's violin Concerto (with Joachim), Mozart's pianoforte Concerto in D minor (with Clara Schumann), "Acis and Galatea," Mendelssohn's music to "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and other works of the same class. But while we know that such music could not have been so performed as to meet the requirements of the present, expert contemporaries were pleased enough to praise. It was of little use, however, to contend against the fact that the coarser work of oratorios affected the power of the choir to deal as, in a purely vocal sense, they had dealt with the more exacting demands of madrigals and part-songs. Leslie's Choir existed

for and by its great mastery of unaccompanied vocal music, and when that began to fail the whole fabric was found to be subsiding. So, in what I cannot call the fullness of time, the concerts came to an end, and the conductor retired to spend his closing years among the music-loving people of Wales.

It can hardly be needful to remind musical readers that the Monday Popular Concerts began, at St James's Hall, in 1858. Seven years later, I became one of their regular frequenters, and so remained till the enterprise closed almost with the century in which it originated. I have no very precise memory of my early experiences, save that I was much exercised on the question of finding a seat. Arthur Chappell, at that time, sent out secured places to very few members of the Press. Indeed, I am not sure that he did so to more than J. W. Davison, who was intimately associated with these concerts from the outset as annotator of the programmes. I remember, also, that enjoyment of my new position as a critic was much lessened by the discovery that it was quite possible I should have to stand and listen. That was actually the case on more than a few occasions, but I always knew how to wait, and as I waited, patiently and uncomplainingly, there came to me not only one, but two numbered seats, and so on to the end.

It is, of course, not to be wondered at if a concert-director prefers selling his seats to giving them away, even to the Press, and Chappell was, no doubt, under some sort of obligation to do

this, so many were the people eager to plump down their cash. The great favour shown to the "Pops" at this period is suggested, I think, by the opening paragraph of a notice written by me for the *P.M.G.* in 1868:—

"The tenth season of these famous concerts came to an end on Monday week, and at the same time an announcement that the eleventh season will begin in November. The interval is too long for Mr Arthur Chappell's pupils (the Monday Pops are educational to all intents and purposes), who would be at their posts all the year round, if that were possible. Not being possible, they take their vacation sadly and wish it were shorter. Looking at the character of what is done, this real popularity is something at which to rejoice. It is significant of a gain for true art hardly to be overestimated."

• Among my clearest recollections of what was done by Arthur Chappell and his artists in the now vanished St James's Hall, is that of certain concerts given in January 1869. The status of the performers on these occasions may be judged from the fact that among them were Joachim, Piatti, and Arabella Goddard, at whose hands nothing ever taken into them suffered. The works performed, as well as their rendering, are even now worth talking about, for they were distinguished at a time when concert-programmes offered much of fresh interest—far more, I venture to say, than



they do now that nearly all great pianists go about with a small repertory, and little pianists plod along the same roads, often coming to grief on the way. Let us look at the three concerts to which I here particularly refer, and, first, at the pianoforte music. This began with Schubert's Sonata in D major (Op. 33); a work first played by Charles Halle in 1859, and taken up ten years later by Arabella Goddard. In 1869 we were, most of us, on the lower "forms" of the Schubert school. Even his pianoforte sonatas, apart from two or three, were but little known, and critics justly deemed it a duty to enlarge upon them, even as I descanted upon the "D major" thirty-nine years ago. Coming fresh from hearing that work, I wrote with a measure of fervour that even now seems to me easily justifiable:—

"An essay might be devoted to this work, so much is there in it admirable in itself, and so much that is peculiarly interesting as characteristic of the composer's special genius. In the former category we may name the splendidly impetuous, or, as Schumann called it, the 'defiant, spirited' opening: the heavenly Adagio which almost makes us fall in love with diffuseness (Schubert's diffuseness, *bien entendu*), and in the merry finale, with its extreme elaboration of certain themes and its incongruity with the last movements of this Sonata's predecessors. But the effect of the whole upon those who heard it

played was such that not even Schumann's enthusiastic eulogy of the composer would have been thought far-fetched: 'He has music wherein to express the most subtle fancies, thoughts, circumstances and conditions of life. Manifold as are the thoughts and aims of men, yet equally varied are the shades of Schubert's music. What he sees with the eye, touches with the hand, that is metamorphosed into music; from the very stones he flings spring up, like Deucalion and Pyrrha, living human forms. He, of all Beethoven's successors, was a deadly enemy of Philistinism, the man to carry on the mission of music in the highest sense of the word!'"

I do not believe that Schubert, when writing, ever had a consciousness of Philistinism, for or against. But the term, in its musical application, was Schumann's own, and he liked to display it when opportunity offered. Schubert made war on nothing and nobody. The gracious Spirit of his art would allow him no time for exercises of that kind. He was wanted for better things.

Other works at the concerts under notice included Mozart's Quartet in C (with the much-disputed Introduction), Beethoven's Sonata in G, for piano and violin, Cherubini's Quartet in E flat, Beethoven's pianoforte Trio in B flat, Schubert's pianoforte Sonata in A minor, Mendelssohn's Quartet in E minor, and Bach's Concerto in A minor for violin and double quartet of strings.

How little Bach was known by amateurs in 1869 may be inferred from what I thought it needful to say :—

“ Even now, after considerably more than a century, the public have but a vague notion of Sebastian Bach’s greatness. As a writer of fugues, and generally as a ‘scientific’ musician, his supremacy is acknowledged as indisputable, but the versatility of his powers and the comprehensiveness of his genius have yet to become known.”

Not long after this reproach was uttered a Bach “boom” began, and, as in Berlin some years earlier, Londoners woke up to some knowledge (only a little) of a very great man.

I have supplied particulars of the foregoing concerts in order to show what large ground the “Pops” occupied, and how varied were their programmes, albeit never going beyond the limits of what was best. The public, on their part, welcomed all that was given, and filled all parts of the Hall even when two concerts per week appealed to them. When Joachim came, as he did each spring, there was a crush, and the season rose to its height. When he was absent, other violinists had a chance—Straus, Sainton, Henry Holmes, and more, among whom some had waited long. Sainton especially enjoyed the seat of the leading violin, and I cannot show this better than by quoting a letter addressed to me in 1879 :—

"71 GLOUCESTER PLACE, HYDE PARK, W.,  
December 11, 1879

"MY DEAR BENNETT,—What could I tell you by way of expressing my feelings of gratitude to you? I really do not know. Fancy if the last few days have made me happy. After four years of *sordino*, A. Chappell has given me an opportunity to show that I am not dead, and you this morning complete the resurrection. With the warm impulse of a most friendly heart, I cannot thank you enough for so much kindness. The old Lotty! poor Lotty! is very happy indeed. We all hope to see you soon in our lunatic asylum, of which Wicket is the finest ornament. —Yours most gratefully, P. SAINTON"

I should explain that "Lotty" was the pet name of Mdme. Sainton Dolby; that "Wicket" was the household name of a resident pupil of Madame, and that "poor Lotty" was one of the verbal forms in which Sainton's great love gushed forth.

In common with the Crystal Palace Concerts and the Sacred Harmonic Society, it might have been expected that the "Pops" would attain at least a century. This would really have been a fair estimate in the case of a musical enterprise that had flourished through four decades. But life, even in the case of a musical enterprise, is—

"but a walking shadow, a poor player,  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more."

So the once virile "Pops" went the dusty road along which travellers all go one way, and they are now but a memory.

I wish it were possible for me to give a full account of the societies, artists, and important compositions which, besides those mentioned above, are stored in the farthest background of my memory. But that is impossible for reasons of space. I may, however, indicate the more distinguished agents in what was a busy and interesting musical time, although very doubtful whether my younger readers will believe it. It is natural, perhaps, for them to think that where they were not there was nothing. But, as said Miss Eliza Cook :—

" Let them exult : their laugh and song  
Are rarely known to last too long."

In the last four years of the sixties, to the events connected with the ordinary course of the great societies were added the following :—Production of Goldschmidt's "Ruth," at Hereford Festival ; performance of Handel's "Jephtha," at St James's Hall, under Joseph Barnby, with (first time) additional accompaniments by Arthur Sullivan ; performance *in memoriam* of Rossini (who had just passed away), at the Crystal Palace ; Festival performance in Exeter Hall, by the Sacred Harmonic Society, in honour of Rossini ; production of Benedict's "St Cecilia," at Norwich ; production of Sterndale Bennett's "Woman of Samaria," at Birmingham, under Cusins ; and of J. F. Barnett's

“The Ancient Mariner,” under the same auspices. Also, the first hearing of two new works in honour of the Turkish Sultan Abd’-ool-Azziz (then the guest of England)—one composed by Costa to words by Bartholomew, and produced at the Royal Italian Opera ; the other, first heard at the Crystal Palace, having as its poet a gentleman calling himself Zafiriki Effendi, and as its composer, Luigi Arditi. The musical importance of *pièces d’occasion* is never very great, and the two composers were quite equal to the demands of their tasks—but the poets ! Here is a sample of Bartholomew :—

“ God preserve thee, Sultan long,  
 Ever keep thee free from woes,  
 May thy State and thee be strong,  
 To dismay and resist thy foes !  
 O may thou continue great,  
 Of thy nation’s love secure,  
 On thee may all blessings wait,  
 And remain for ever sure.”

And here, not to give the Englishman an unfair advantage, is an extract from the Effendi’s Ode :—

“ In the garments of thy gladness, why, O London, art thou bright ?  
 As a bride in her apparel, fresh and fair art thou to-night ;  
 Why, O Palace, built of diamonds, still with fragrant flowers  
 bedight,  
 Do thy stones all flame as rubies, flash and glow with fiery light ?  
 Why do voices make thee tremble—voices of a host of might ?  
 The Sooltán Abd’-ool-Azziz comes, hail the cause of our delight.”

This is not poetry, but it may have been worthy of the Commander of the Faithful. Indeed, I will go as far as to say that it was worthy, and even went beyond when invoking a certain building in St James’s Park as “a Palace built of diamonds.”

## CHAPTER XVII

### PIANOFORTE RECITALS

Remarks confined to Halle, Von Bülow and Rubinstein—Changes in programmes—Halle of the older school—Schubert's influence on "pianism"—Halle a quiet pianist—Not a contortionist—In later years an orchestral conductor—His success on that line—Rubinstein visits London (1867)—A severe criticism—Rubinstein visits us again in the eighties—A different criticism—Rubinstein at Glasgow—Stillie "pumps" him vainly—I meet Rubinstein several times—A silent man—Not communicative to critics—Hans von Bülow—Remarks upon his style and mannerisms—Rubinstein outplays him at all points.

**L**ET me premise that the scope of my remarks under this head is limited to Halle, Bülow, and Rubinstein. I would gladly take in more, but, oh! they are so many.

It has been said that the term "recital," as applied to a species of musical performance in public, came in with the latter half of the last century. If so, it must have appeared rather late. The question is one I have not examined, but I well remember that, in 1861, when Charles Halle first began his serial recitals in London, the word was usually printed in inverted commas, as though not yet accepted. The commas, as I see in an article by Davison now before me, continued in use till 1867, but disappeared a little later, as though the word had then acquired

a right to a place in music's poverty-stricken terminology

Halle often confined himself at the outset to the sonatas of Beethoven, doing this through the series of 1861-62-66. But in his seventh season (1867) he drew his material from a wider field of choice, and thus brought himself into competition with Arabella Goddard, whose husband, J. W. Davison, delighted to place novelties, by many composers, under her flying fingers. We know little nowadays of such wide-embracing programmes as were presented in the sixties ; pianists having got into the habit, with the exception of Miss Fanny Davies, and very few others, of working up a limited number of big examples to a high state of perfection, and making them serve the artist's purpose in face of the public. An important journal said, in 1867, that the number of more modern composers than Beethoven who were influencing the style and character of pianoforte music "induced a modification of Halle's scheme, which led to the introduction of works by Clementi, Weber, Steibelt, Mendelssohn, John Field, Chopin, Stephen Heller, and others. The modified arrangement answered well enough, although it must be owned that the works of Clementi and Dussek were but imperfectly explored," and so on to the same purpose. The writer was Davison himself, and he, knowing at that time as much about pianoforte works as Halle, was entitled to criticise.





ARABELLA GODDARD  
(MRS. J. W. DAVISON)



But whatever Halle's defects of selection, the miscellaneous recital programme established itself, and drove the one-composer scheme virtually out of the field.

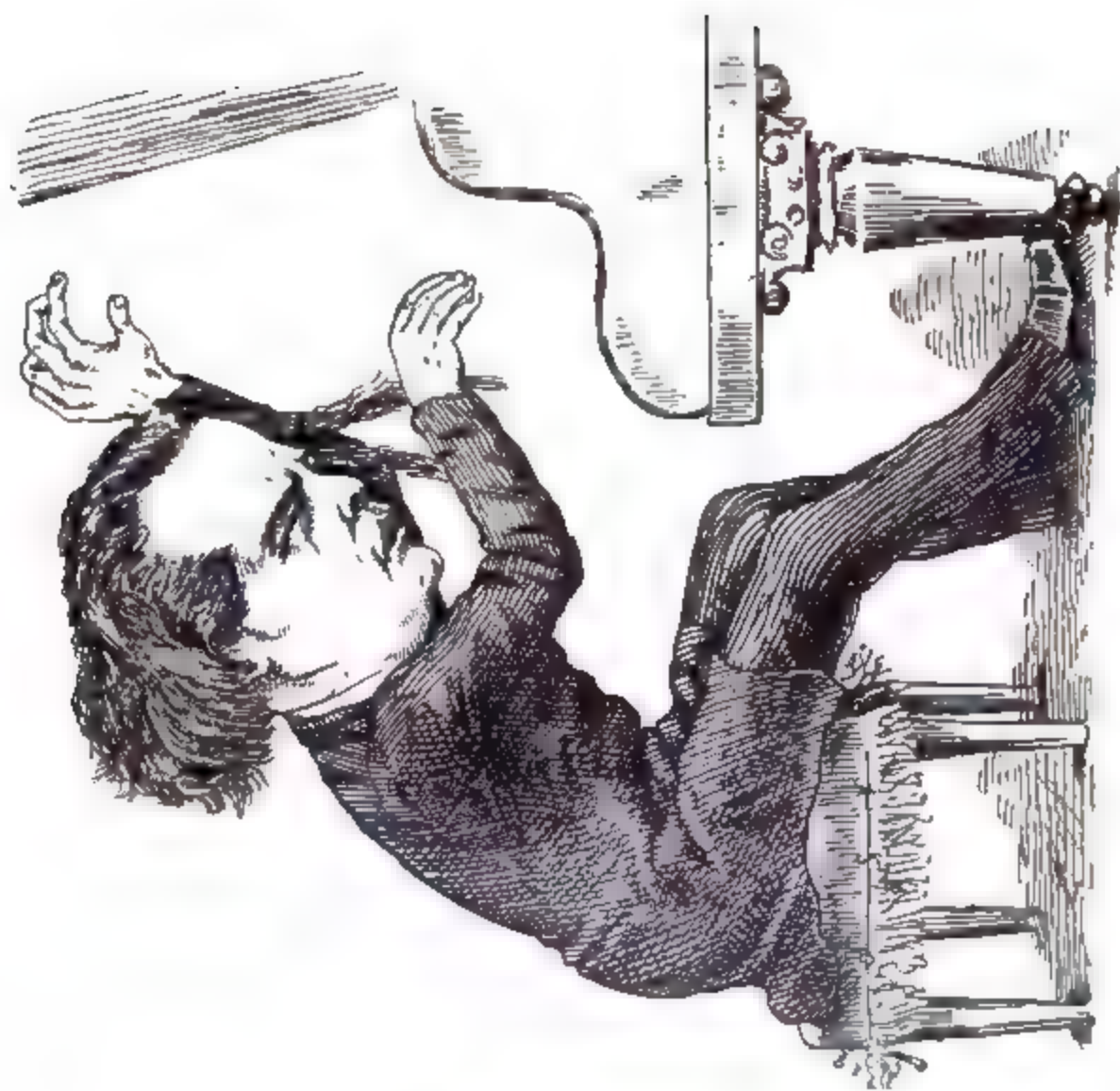
The vogue which Schubert gained at this time by the publication of much of his long-neglected music was turned to excellent account by Halle. Out of the eleven sonatas by Schubert then published, Halle, in 1867, played nine, the excepted works being those in E flat and B major, which Davison declared were among "the most genuine and beautiful of the set." But the nine opened the eyes of the public, and Halle ran them, especially that in A minor, for all they were worth, which was much. These sonatas suited their reciter-exponent remarkably well. He was not a Boanerges, nor was the Thunderer his father. His qualities were best shown in the more gentle and more delicate work of the school anterior to that in which powerful pianists learned to break strings and smash hammers. It is hardly necessary to say that he was not a demonstrative player, and never sought to illustrate his chosen music by pantomimic attitudes and gestures. At that time there were artists in London working for what they called "the higher development of pianoforte playing," but Halle copied none of their methods; even the "high action"—hands lifted above the lid of the instrument—was ignored by him, as well as by Arabella Goddard, and, in almost equal measure, by Clara Schumann.

Nevertheless, Halle did not sit at the pianoforte with the rigidity of Gog or Magog. When in sentimental mood he posed a little, and Charles Lyall has hit him off exactly in the accompanying caricature. It was not, therefore, by sensational means that this German pianist ran his recitals through so many years, but no doubt he was largely helped by the fact that the public could then listen to quiet music, and tolerate a refined style, faculties now almost lost to them.

It is difficult for even a strong man to swim far against the stream, and, as years went on, Charles Halle tired, and the pianoforte became a secondary consideration. In no case, perhaps, could he have contended successfully against the muscular pianists of the new school, who had a public by no means eminently wise at their back. From that time he became more closely identified with orchestral music, and on the tide of that great form of art was carried to success. Of his work, and that which rewarded it, he was naturally and justifiably proud, and nothing gave him greater pleasure than to see among his audience in Manchester men whose opinion he valued. In 1880 I received from him the following letter :—

“ 11 MANSFIELD ST., W.,  
23 *Feb.* 1880

“ MY DEAR MR BENNETT,—You have once or twice asked me to let you know whenever we did something specially interesting in Manchester, because you might perhaps run down and judge



RUBINSTEIN



CHARLES HALLE  
(A SCHUBERT "ANDANTE")



of our doings yourself. I wish therefore to inform you that on the 11th of March I shall repeat 'La Damnation de Faust,' by Berlioz, in English, and I do not think we could offer you anything more interesting. A. Chappell, Piatti, Santley and several other friends are coming to hear the performance, and I should be uncommonly glad to see you there also. Should you be able to come you would much oblige me by giving due information, that I may keep as good a seat as possible for you. Always sincerely yours,

"CHARLES HALLE."

I leave Halle with this letter, as on the highest eminence of his career.

In 1867 I was a very young critic—two years old—and a comparatively young man. This combination of youthfulness implied, of course, that I had a great opinion of myself, and was justified in taking to task men before whom I was as a mole-hill to Mont Blanc. But I did not remember the extent of my impudence or the wealth of my self-assurance till the other day, when in looking through a pile of old articles I came upon one entitled, "Rubinstein, Pianist and Composer." The reader may peruse it if he so pleases, for here are the essential parts of my effusion, given with the understanding that Rubinstein was, in 1867, visiting London after a long absence, and doing so under the auspices of John Ella, Director of the Musical Union.

“It is hardly necessary to say that the present is not M. Rubinstein's first appearance in England. But his previous visit is sufficiently long ago, in an age when events are so crowded together, to remove from the minds of all but very few the impression he then made. During the last few years this gentleman has been known to the vast mass of music-loving people in England only by the reports which have come from across the water. These have led to a vague, dimly defined notion of greatness, which naturally makes him an object of interest, and accounts for whatever ‘lionising’ he has received at the hands of a novelty-loving society. Judging from M. Rubinstein's performance at the concert of the Philharmonic Society on Monday last, we are sorry on his account that fate brought him within the attractive influence of Mr Ella. Both as pianist and composer he has dissipated the impression made upon us by common report, offering a valuable contribution to truth, no doubt, but at considerable cost to his English reputation. In the former capacity we must admit that he combines many of the elements of popularity. M. Rubinstein belongs to the demonstrative order of pianoforte players who eke out their appeals to the ear with appeals to the eye. He has the ‘high action’ and labouring manner which are so often looked upon as evidences of a masterly dash of style, and of absorption in the work. He has, also, a mechanical dexterity well adapted to



excite astonishment, if ill-prepared to bear a close inspection. But, on the other hand, the tone of M. Rubinstein is poor and thin; while, so far as the concerto he played on Monday allowed us to judge, his playing is deficient both in expressiveness and intellectual power. We have in England a dozen pianists quite his equal in point of execution, and more than one or two who are his superiors in everything else."

"But what shall we say of the 'Concerto No 7, op. 70,' which M. Rubinstein selected from among his own compositions for presentation to the Philharmonic audience? In the first place, we may express a hope that, with singular wilfulness, he picked out the worst thing he had then written. It is expedient so to hope, because if this work be among his best, we shudder at the bare prospect of being called upon to hear more of Rubinstein. However this may be, it is certain that anything more wild, gloomy, rhapsodical, or unmeaning passes us to conceive. We shall be told, perhaps, by the admirers of the modern German school, that if we knew what the composer intended to illustrate, the whole thing would be intelligible. Possibly, but we don't know, and neither M. Rubinstein nor his music does anything in the way of informing us. That the concerto is not 'pure' music must be plain enough. 'Pure' music tells its own story, but this of M. Rubinstein has no story to tell, and can only jabber like an Irvingite speaking in an 'unknown tongue,' having,

moreover, an equal need for an interpreting key. We are driven to conclude, therefore, that the concerto illustrates some series of transcendental ideas the character of which we are left to guess. It is really time that a stand was made against such productions. No matter by whom written, whether Wagner, Liszt, or the gentleman who is now amongst us, they are simply the offspring of an incompetence which seeks to hide poverty of ideas under pretentious rhapsodies, and by making the waters of their very shallow stream muddy, to induce the wondering exclamation, 'Oh! the depth!' We must not dwell upon the details of M. Rubinstein's work. It will be sufficient to say, that each of its three movements is marked by a pervading gloom which often breaks out into passion; that there is hardly a phrase of real melody in it, and that, in common with the rest of its class, its only use is to serve the purpose of the dead kites one used to see nailed to the doors of farmers' barns."

In this style was Rubinstein welcomed by me, and not by me alone. That the Russian master laughed I can easily believe, the more easily because, now, I laugh myself, wondering how I could have penned such reckless criticism.

Rubinstein came again, in the eighties, and in one visit took down the pride of Hans von Bülow, who had previously held the field. His reception then was of a very different nature, and showed a disposition to overrun facts in the visitor's praise.

As to this, let me quote from a letter addressed to me by an estimable pianist (Mr J. H. Bonawitz), who also was a pianoforte reciter :

“ Allow me to thank you very much for kindly mentioning my name in your first Rubinstein criticism, on Thursday last. None of the other critics of the leading papers has found it worth while to do the same. But this would certainly not give me a right to complain, had not some of them spoken of the Rubinstein Recitals as if never anything similar had been done before, or could be done except by Rubinstein. One of them goes so far as to say : ‘ No one less gifted in these respects could hope to comprise within such limits a selection making any real pretensions to completeness. By allotting only one work to each composer it could be, and it has been, done with comparative ease, but the result can have little artistic value ’ &c.

“ Now that sounds exactly as if Mr Pauer or myself had only played one piece of each composer at our Historical Recitals. But if that musical critic had studied my programmes as carefully as Rubinstein’s, he would have found that I played ‘ in seven Historical Recitals, seven different Sonatas by Beethoven, four different pieces by Mozart, three different pieces by Haydn, six different pieces by Bach, as many by Handel, Scarlatti, Rameau, Couperin, and several by Byrde, Bull, Frescobaldi, &c., of Chopin’s,

Schumann's, Mendelssohn's, from seven to twenty, and, besides these, about thirty pieces by living composers of all nations.' "

Whether or no the critics had blundered in their zeal to exalt Rubinstein, my quotation from the Bonawitz letter is distinctly a contribution to the history of pianoforte recitals in this country.

And now by way of set-off against the example of critical inexperience and rashness given above, I will quote from my final notice of Rubinstein's performances in London, in 1886 :

"In this our eighth notice of M. Rubinstein's doings amongst us it would be superfluous to enlarge upon the manner of his performances. Enough that he displayed once more the brilliant and masterful qualities which place him, in several respects, at the head of living pianists ; manifesting also the defects upon which it has again and again of late been our duty to comment. The great artist's recitals will long be remembered, not so much for their historical value, since that might have been greater, as for their revelation of transcendent powers. With all his faults of manner, Rubinstein has the fascination of genius. To test this, measure him by comparison with anybody else. He is among pianists as Saul, the son of Kish, among the men of Israel. He came one year and snuffed out Hans von Bülow ; he came this spring and we forgot Franz Liszt in his overshadowing presence."

This, it seems to me, is an *amende honorable*; yet the first criticism was quite as sincere as the second. But between them stood hard upon twenty years of experience and growth, and much water runs under London Bridge in twenty years.

I had various opportunities of cultivating a personal acquaintance with Rubinstein, meeting him in musical society, and two or three times dining in his company. But we were not sympathetic, and, apart from that, I had made it a rule never to hamper my freedom of speech as a critic. So it is that I have no original story to tell about him, and one example at second-hand is enough.

Hans von Bülow, though here I place him after Rubinstein, visited London as a "reciter" in the golden days of that vocation, and at an earlier date in those days than his rival. In fact, he had a season or two to himself, and made good use of the time that passed before the figure of the great Russian appeared again above our English horizon. I mention both in close approximation here for a purpose.

Rubinstein returned to London in 1881, to give seven pianoforte recitals and do other things, stimulating me, for example, to write some of the few articles upon which I now look back with uncommon satisfaction. I know, of course, a man is desperately prejudiced when giving an estimate of his own works, but the reader is free to exact what discount he pleases. Below are extracts from the first of the articles referred to above; they are

inserted to show how, sometimes, an impassive critic can be moved, and what a personality it was that overshadowed Von Bülow :—

“Time was,” I said in the *Daily Telegraph* of May 30, 1881, “when Mr Rubinstein appealed almost in vain to English amateurs. He piped unto them but they would not dance. To some he was incomprehensible, to others strange and therefore offensive. So for years he gave us up. England was the Alsatia of the Gentiles, wherein no writ from the Court of Art could run. At last he resolved to try again, because news of Dr von Bülow’s successful British progress had reached him. Mr Rubinstein may then have said to himself: ‘If those islanders find warmth in sham passion—if they bask in the rays of a painted sun, much more will they in those of an orb of fire.’ Anyhow, he came, and the people almost worshipped him, doubting no longer that what they heard was great, and finding in their amazement not so much cause of offence as provocation to that blind faith which is ready to trust beyond the limit of its power to trace. It is not too much to say that Mr Rubinstein has been consciously waited for since 1877. Every amateur, therefore, who went to St James’s Hall on Thursday afternoon did so with full assurance of being one of a crowd rejoicing with a common joy in the fact that hope had ripened into substance. No one is silly enough to believe that all this enthusiasm arises from the merits of its object. Perfection was never generally

admired in our world. We crucify it, crying 'Not this man, but Barabbas!' Let us not fail to see and frankly acknowledge the probability that Mr Rubinstein's combination of striking faults with remarkable excellences accounts for the strength of the interest which he excites. Some people love the faults, others the merits. It may be wrong, however, to speak of Mr Rubinstein's artistic personality as having only two aspects. In effect he is many-sided."

"In Schumann's 'Fantasie-Stück,' and subsequently, in selections from Chopin, the artist threw aside all bonds. He was himself again, or rather, since he is himself in many ways, he turned towards us his Boanergian side, and roared as became a Son of Thunder. Surely, the passionate Rubinstein is a phenomenon—a volcanic eruption attended by noises, fire and smoke. We may not recognise here a pianist in the act of performing pianoforte music, but we are in the presence of an amazing display of musical impulse and inspiration which fascinates even those who do not approve. One thinks of the war-horse in the grandest of Eastern poems: 'He paweth in the valley and rejoices in his strength . . . he mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted . . . he swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage.' It must be said that this Rubinstein overrides his subject. He may be playing anything, for aught we know or care. An overwhelming personality fills the whole

field of vision, shutting out the composer who, indeed, has often little to do with the result. It is well, therefore, that we have only one passionate Rubinstein. Were there more, stern duty to art might compel us to chain them up. Happily, in this case, a corrective is ever close at hand in Rubinstein the tender, who speaks—let the last great Laureate say how he speaks—

“ ‘ An accent very low  
In blandishment . . .  
Right to the heart and brain, though undescried,  
Winning its way with extreme gentleness.’ ”

Here is the Shepherd's pipe after the storm in the 'Pastoral' Symphony; the song of the thrush when the thunder has rolled away; the ripple of the mountain stream where erst the torrent roared, and it is all very refreshing and delightful."

C. L. Gruneison used to claim, and all his timid friends to allow, that he first persuaded Von Bülow to try his fortune in England. I am quite ready to believe it. Descending to particulars from the magnificent generalities amid which he lived and moved and had his being, Gruneison assured us that he met with the pianist somewhere on the Continent, and, pleased and astonished by his powers, pressed him to take our little island within the scope of his tours. I do not know, but can conceive, that Bülow held a large share in the general opinion of Germans that, with regard to music, we were not of much account. However,



there were the guineas, and it may have been because of them that Bülow consented to give us a trial under the business management of George Dolby, a brother of Madame Sainton.

English amateurs then became acquainted with a school of "pianism" never before so fully exemplified in their hearing. That many of them were somewhat puzzled and doubtful I know, but the mass, true to the instinct which makes England open her arms to the foreign musician, accepted him with acclamation. Some part of his success may have been due to a certain measure and form of eccentricity. An Englishman, openly or secretly, is delighted with the eccentric in humanity. Shakespeare's Trinculo knew that, and had, also, having once lived in England, an English desire to turn marvels into cash. Looking on the "monster" in Prospero's island, he said: "Were I in England now (as once I was) and had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver; there would this monster make a man; any strange beast there makes a man—when they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian." I cannot be sure that Grüneison told this story to Bülow, who, however, must have known it well, Shakespeare being, as our Teutonic friends say, a German poet. But, be this as it may, his little tricks and his manners gratified the public considerably, and it was worth while turning round to see a thousand smiling faces when Bülow moved along the platform

carrying his opera-hat as a sidesman bears his plate at the offertory.

As an admirer of Von Bülow, I never attained the status of what is now called "a whole hogger." The man struck me as an executive master without a heart; one who pounded through a sonata, or what not, with most rhythmical precision, but without a touch of real sentiment, his face all the while remaining as hard set as his playing. Intellectually he was far greater, but mind could not serve him much in the region of feeling, and there, as I then thought, and now believe, he largely failed. But outside the realm of emotion, Bülow did some things wonderfully well. There comes to my mind a concert in Glasgow, the programme of which contained Beethoven's noble song, "Creation's Hymn," with Madame Patey as singer, and Bülow, by special favour, as accompanist. With these artists, the song put on a new aspect, and the broad impressive harmonies conveyed a new sensation. I had not heard the song before, though I had many times listened to it, and I do not expect to hear it again. The music remains, the artists are dead.

I cannot boast of having been a special favourite with Bülow. Indeed, I am disposed to think that he disliked me very cordially, and my inclination in that regard is supported by the only letter I ever received from him. On one of the days closely following the letter, I was at Edward Dannreuther's house, when Bülow bounced busily into the room,

said a hurried word or two to his friend and flamed out again like Will o' the Wisp. I never saw Bülow so agile, nor ever was so confirmed in belief that the great ones of music bear adverse criticism much less well than the small folk.

Of the pianoforte reciters who have appeared since those here noticed, their name truly is legion. I must ignore even those who have passed away and left behind them a name and a memory. This book is not an encyclopædia.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### LIBRETTI

I make some changes in the libretti of Benedict's "St Peter," Randegger's "Fridolin," and J. F. Barnett's "The Good Shepherd"—List of twenty-four works afterwards entirely written by me, with remarks upon the more important—A letter of Massenet concerning "Manon."

**F**OR many years I was an industrious creator, or compiler, of books for music, and during that time I witnessed, and took part in, one of the most complete changes of form that musical literature can show. How it came about that I entered upon this line of work I can hardly say. Probably the money reward had something to do with it; that consideration being one which a musical journalist can hardly afford to treat lightly. But it was for no money's sake that my first essay as a librettist was made, the task I undertook being one rather of mending than making. In point of fact, I should have shrunk from making, and the mending I regarded as merely a diversion from musical criticism, bringing with it a sense of relief and freshened interest.

It is rather curious that three repairing jobs came first to hand in the department upon which I entered so lightly. They were John Francis

Barnett's cantata, or short oratorio, "The Good Shepherd," Alberto Randegger's cantata, "Fridolin," and Julius Benedict's oratorio, "St Peter." Concerning the second and third of these works the reader already knows something, and no more need be said, but the first being that which invited me to walk in a new path may fitly claim a new notice.

The "book" of "The Good Shepherd" bears the orthodox form of the period in which it was written—the form exemplified for all time in Handel's "Messiah"—one, that is to say, which held its ground from the first half of the eighteenth to the second half of the nineteenth century. Nothing connected with music is better known, and I am not under any obligation to describe it. Enough that a librettist charged with the construction of a Biblical oratorio was free to choose didactic or dramatic form; but that, in either case, the words must be taken from the Sacred Book, not necessarily with regard to their original situation and meaning, so long as they were available without doing rough violence to either, and that the texts stood in separate numbers, each for distinct and detached musical treatment.

The original book of Barnett's "Good Shepherd" was, almost as a matter of course, in the form just described, as, absolutely of course, were the alterations which I thought fit to make. When republished with the changes some of my brother critics were so astonished that they said little or

nothing ; others, however, fastened upon an eight-line stanza I had written for the purpose of a chorale, and spoke in a tone of warning against presumption, while Percy Betts, of the *Figaro*, was quietly quizzical. Generally, I fancy, my début as a libretto-mender gave occasion for humour, so that the critics really had something for which to be thankful. How Davison enjoyed it appears in the following extract from a letter primarily intended to inform me that he and his brother ("Bill") had suffered a loss by fire :—

"JOSEPH,—We are burnt down! I have been consoling myself with the 'Good Shepherd.' Be a good shepherd. All Lyall's blocks are destroyed. But be a good shepherd. We struggle manfully, Bill and I. We are maimed. But be a good shepherd. I have been up four nights. But it begins with a Pastoral, quite new, as though one had never heard the like of it before. Be a good shepherd (why shepherd, with a dropped e?) It is a one-eyed shepherd. . . . No more. But be a good shepherd.—J. W. D."

Of "Fridolin" and "St Peter" I have already written, and now I dismiss my patchwork efforts.

Out of the dark cupboard of the past I have gathered the following list of works, and, in producing it, I am terribly afraid that, ere he gets to the end, the weary reader will exclaim, "Hold, enough!" But I must risk that :—

## ORIGINAL OPERAS.

"Thorgrim," . . . .	Cowen.
"Jeanie Deans," . . . .	M'Cunn.
"Maid of Cefyn Ydfa," . . . .	Joseph Parry.

## ENGLISH VERSIONS.

"Manon," . . . .	Massenet.
"Philémon et Baucis," . . . .	Gounod.
"The Sorcerer," . . . .	Herkomer.
"L'Esclave Amoureuse," . . . .	Bizet.

## ORATORIOS.

"The Rose of Sharon," . . . .	Mackenzie.
"Bethlehem," . . . .	Mackenzie.
"Ruth," . . . .	Cowen.
"Isaias" (English Version), . . . .	Mancinelli.
"The Garden of Olivet" (English Version), . . . .	Bottesini.
"The Transfiguration," . . . .	Cowen.
"Repentance of Nineveh," . . . .	Bridge.
"The Risen Lord," . . . .	Edwards.
"The Dream of Jubal," . . . .	Mackenzie.
"Bethany," . . . .	Lee Williams.
"Gethsemane," . . . .	Lee Williams.
"Emmaus," . . . .	Brewer.

## CANTATAS, ETC.

"St John's Eve," . . . .	Cowen.
"The Golden Legend" (Adap- tation), . . . .	Sullivan.
Jubilee Ode, . . . .	Mackenzie.
"The Water-Lily," . . . .	Cowen.
"Story of Sayid," . . . .	Mackenzie.

I shall probably be warned against walking in a vain show ; nevertheless, I am a little proud of this mass of extra work—proud, assuredly, of the number of libretti written in times of relaxation

from the harder and sterner duties which beset the musical critic in this strenuous world of London.

In connection with many of the works mentioned above something of more or less interest remains among my memories, and may deserve brief mention here.

### “THORGRIM”

This opera was produced at Drury Lane when Augustus Harris and Carl Rosa were in some measure allied for the term of the Rosa season. What the conditions were I never knew. They were no business of mine, but it did occur to me that Harris, with his reputation for doing things well, would take care that “Thorgrim” suffered none of the dire evils which wait on careless production. It was with some confidence, therefore, that I went to the theatre to watch one of the latest rehearsals. But confidence soon broke down. The stage was a scene which filled me with despair. Harris crossed the boards once and led a company of dancers with much spirit, then going to his room, as having more important work. The amiable stage-manager was ready to promise anything for a moment's peace, but it seemed to me that the people on the stage had no better than the faintest notion of what the opera was about. I questioned a few of the chorus, and discovered the worst. The chorus were really ignorant of the plot, and of the relations of the characters one to another. They had done what they were told to do, and the



responsibility for knowing nothing more was not theirs.

Some minutes later I had the chorus in the saloon. I read to them all that was necessary of the libretto, explaining the situations as I went along. The members were delighted with the knowledge that had taken the place of ignorance, many of them adding that I need be under no apprehension regarding their share of the common task. But in some other respects the first performance was an example of "how not to do it."

In one act of "Thorgrim" the interior of a Viking fire-hall is shown, with the rough and ready arrangements for warming and partial lighting. Metal troughs were placed end to end down the hall, and these, of course, should have been filled by logs, with plenty of flame (theatrical) apparently consuming them. But, instead, the good London public, though they duly saw the troughs and the blocks (a meagre allowance), were, in the matter of fire, restricted to a few tiny jets which feebly glimmered here and there among the fuel. Oh, the weakness of it all! Yet this was an outcome of spirited management! Spirited fiddlesticks! The second performance showed better results, but the mischief was done.

### "JEANIE DEANS"

This opera came to light in Edinburgh under the auspices of the Carl Rosa Company, and was produced in a style which powerfully contrasted with

the style of "Thorgrim." Money had been spent ; no pains had been spared, and all engaged not only knew what they had to do, but how to do it. Soldiers bore a part in one scene, and were drawn from a Highland regiment stationed at the Castle. It was amusing to see these gallant warriors acting in aid of the civil power against a mob from the Wynds. All their military orders were as smartly carried out as could be expected in the case of men armed with such a lumbering weapon as old "Brown Bess," but the expression of their faces, when there was any at all, was a sight to see. It was of the stony order, and had the inflexibility of their discipline. They fought like machines after a word of command had set them going, and then waited for the next word, each with the same unspeculative countenance.

I have always strongly objected to "taking a call," and, in fact, have invariably refused the few which have been offered me ; doing so, however, not from want of respect for the audience, but because I wished to avoid nervous wear and tear. On this account I left the theatre some minutes before the curtain fell on the last act of "Jeanie Deans," and walked back to my hotel. It was told me later that the audience, having congratulated the composer-conductor, Hamish M'Cunn, as he well deserved, expressed a desire to see me, and, although informed that I had left the theatre, continued their clamour. They may have wished to give me a cheer, or to glare at the Southron who



Musica  
(muse)

a man who is excellent well educated, Joseph Bennett.  
J. Mayhew Aug. 1855



had dared to lay his hand upon Scott's novel, or to hoot a bad workman off the stage—anyhow, my strategic movement to the rear got me out of a difficulty in which the odds were two to one against.

“MANON”

On the subject of my English version of this opera, produced at Drury Lane in May 1835, the composer (Massenet) sent me a letter which I cannot withhold from this book :—

“PARIS, 18 *Mai* '85

“MONSIEUR ET CHER COLLABORATEUR,—Puisque de tristes circonstances m'ont privé de me rendre à Londres je veux vous dire à quel point je vous suis reconnaissant de ce que vous avez fait pour le succès de Manon.

“Non seulement vous avez bien voulu écrire un étude très flatteuse sur cet opéra mais vous avez su créer une adaptation du plus habiles et du plus intéressantes.

“Vous avez évité avec un tact parfait ce qui aurait pu devenir difficile à faire accepter en Angleterre, et c'est là une chose qu'il importait de réussir.

“Vous avez réussi !

“Merci encore, toutes mes félicitations et l'expression de mes sentiments de vive sympathie.

“J. MASSENET”

“MAID OF CEFN YDFA”

This “musical play” was the last of the late Dr Joseph Parry's works of pretence. Its brief

history is soon told, but cannot be charged with a lack of interest proportioned to its want of vitality. To begin with, story and leading characters had a foundation in fact, and the tradition which has fixed some persons in the drama for ever in the public memory of South Wales is still fresh and green after 170 years. A small portrait of the heroine, Ann Thomas, is even yet to be found, and a copy remains in my possession. As for the narrative, it may be outlined thus :—

Ann Thomas lived with her mother at the farm-house of Cefn Ydfa. Though an heiress, she was in love with Will Hopkin, an artisan and Eisteddfod bard, and, as an heiress, she was wooed by Anthony Maddock, a solicitor, whose suit was strongly favoured by the maiden's family, while she herself would not listen to it. The plot of the original story included a device to separate the lovers by taking measures to drive Hopkin from the neighbourhood, the girl, meanwhile, being confined to her room in the farm-house. Upon these measures the play turns. The youth is compelled to absent himself, while Ann, weakened by severe treatment, and unable further to resist, accepts Maddock as her husband, and dies of a broken heart. The fate of poor Ann made an immense impression throughout South Wales, and her story soon held a high place in popular literature, but it had weak points as material for a play, and certain changes were necessary, the most imperative being to cut out the marriage,

so that Ann could die true to the man she loved. I doubt if the Welsh folk approved of the alterations in their touching domestic legend, but, from my point of view, they were necessary and they were made.

The libretto was forwarded to Dr Parry piecemeal, and he set music to them so quickly as to be asking always for more. Never was such an eager composer, and his Celtic temperament was against him. You cannot carry the heights of music with a rush. Frequently you must dig your way up to the front, throw heavy forces on the flanks, and practise all the tricks of tactics. But Parry was ever rushing, and his music suffered for it. Here is the letter in which he acknowledged receipt of my first instalment :—

SHEFFIELD HOUSE,  
LLANDUDNO, *Feb.* 29, '90

“DEAR Mr BENNETT,—As I left home this morning for here, I was delighted with the arrival of your first contribution for our opera. In the train I naturally read your words over and over again. I am glad to tell you that I like them and the situations very much, and shall set to work at once. I finished the Prelude last week, which works out the whole story. I hope you will like it.

“Mr David (chairman of committee) will return on Saturday night, and I shall see him, and show him all on Sunday. He will be delighted, also the committee, that I have received from you

your first instalment, and that you are to visit Penarth soon.—Believe me to be, cordially yours,  
 “JOSEPH PARRY”

The journey to Penarth, referred to above, was for the purpose of visiting the scenes of Ann Thomas's love and death. A little company of bards and musicians went with me to Cefn Ydfa, where there is still a farm-stead, but a curse seems to rest upon the house in which the girl suffered. It is roofless, parts of the wall have fallen in, and nobody has the courage to rebuild or repair. In the parish church near the altar is the maid's vault, carefully kept and adorned with the floral offerings of her sympathisers. It is a place of pilgrimage.

The opera was produced at Cardiff by one of the Moody-Manners Companies; shortly afterwards the composer died, and, as far as I am aware, his work died with him.

### “THE ROSE OF SHARON”

I have done nothing in the line of libretti which gave me more pleasure in the doing than the “book” of Sir A. C. Mackenzie's Oriental oratorio. The composer (who was simply Mr Mackenzie at that time) suggested that we might take such a work in both our hands, and I was nothing loth, but the subject proved a matter of difficulty; the Bible, as it seemed to me, having at that time been ransacked from cover to cover, and



all the good dramatic themes utilised. Happily, in the pages of an American magazine, I came upon indications which put me in exactly the right path. I found them in an article on the dramatic structure of "Solomon's Song," explaining and illustrating the views taken by certain eminent German and French Biblical authorities. This was enough, and in due time "The Rose of Sharon" was announced to the world of English oratorio.

In making the book I had to deal with a somewhat formidable obstacle. The "Song of Solomon" is so manifestly a love-poem, without any religious basis, that I could treat it only in parabolic form, with an application of the parable in prologue and epilogue. With reference to this matter, I may be permitted to quote a passage from Mr W. L. Courtney's "Literary Man's Bible." Introducing the Scriptural poem, Mr Courtney says:—

"It would have been felt to be a strange omission if Hebrew literature did not contain some specimens of erotic songs. This is clearly an Epithalamium, perhaps consisting of several bridal songs sung during the seven-day marriage festival, when the bridegroom was looked upon as a king (Solomon), and his bride as a queen. According to the Oriental ideas, the love here depicted must be conjugal love, not the love of an amorous girl." Religious people are "touchy," and I could not present my Biblical libretto as

a secular Epithalamium. Hence the adoption, as far as necessary, of the Christian idea regarding the parallel love of Christ and His Church. Another difficulty also arose—one not anticipated, but peculiarly obstinate. I refer to passages alluding to the numerous wives and concubines of Solomon, and to the strong expressions of Eastern love-passion with which the original poem abounds. It did not occur to me that these, having place in a Book which we are taught to read, study, and reverence would be condemned as “improper” elsewhere. Yet so it turned out, and the neglect of Mackenzie’s beautiful music is attributed by many who admire it to the nonconformist and evangelical conscience. But there is nobody in the world more silly than your religious prig. He belongs to the people included in Carlyle’s famous “mostly.”

I cannot pass over a curious happening which, at one moment, boded ill to the first public appearance of this oratorio. The Norwich chorus, even after many rehearsals, which should have taught them better, condemned it almost with unanimity, and so spread their unfavourable judgment about the city that, as the festival approached, tickets went off more and more slowly. But after the general rehearsal, under the composer’s direction, when the masterly orchestration had been heard for the first time, and the solos had told their tale through the mouths of Nevada, Patey, Lloyd, and Santley,

there was a sudden revolution. The chorus again went about the city, this time with fervent words of praise; the tickets sold rapidly, and, after the performance, the music was crowned with the laurel of victory. This was not all. The chorus, repentant, supplied themselves with roses, and as the last note sounded, showered them on and around the composer.

“ Enchanting rose,  
That like a virgin queen, salutes the sun,  
Dew-diadem'd.”

Mackenzie was the sun of that day.

### “ RUTH ”

A circumstance not unlike that which wrought harm in the case of “The Rose” did mischief to “Ruth”; the public once again applying to an innocent Bible story the rigid conventionality of the suburban mind. As it stands in the Sacred Book, the tale of Ruth and Boaz is as chaste as anything from the pen of Jane Austen, but knowing the tendency of nice people towards ideas which are the reverse, I made slight changes to humour their nicety. But they took their old stand—that is to say, they would have an Eastern tale only after it had been brought as far as possible into conformity with the notions of their “straitest sect.” I really could not prevent Ruth from paying a nocturnal visit to Boaz. Had I done so I should now be recording my own shame, and inditing apologies to the Bible.

“Ruth” was produced at a Festival of the Three Choirs, and I greatly fear that Dr Cowen’s extremely beautiful dance-music in the festival scene was grievous to the “unco guid.” I wonder why they have not called a meeting, and passed a vote of censure upon King David for dancing before the Lord in Gilgal.

### “THE DREAM OF JUBAL”

Sir A. C. Mackenzie’s most successful large work down to the present time has been that named above. For the result credit may be given to music which is among the finest of its modern kind, no matter by whom written, and also, in a measure, to the novel form of the libretto. It was the composer himself who suggested to me the production of a work with reading, or recitation, accompanied by orchestra, and interspersed with set “numbers”—solo and chorus. The idea had aforetime come into my mind, and was straightway bidden to pass out again, because I despaired of finding a composer courageous enough to entertain and act upon it. I did not hesitate when Mackenzie proposed the task, and, if such a feat could be conceived as possible to me, I should here say that I “jumped” at it.

After this the question was where to find an appropriate subject. For some time I searched at large and vainly, nothing that I favoured at first sight lending itself with entire promise to the treatment. Thus was I driven to call upon my

own imagination, and slowly the story of Jubal and his informing angel shaped itself to my mind. The subject took hold of me; I was filled with it, despite many other claims upon attention, but I could write nothing till the holiday season came, and I went off to a quiet village on the Severn shore, there to woo the "gentle nymph" who had power to "thaw the mumming spell." Sabrina was good to me, for within two hours after reaching the inn I had written more than a hundred lines, and was fairly set a-going.

"The Dream of Jubal" was produced in the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool, under the composer's direction, with Charles Fry as reciter. There was, of course, some objection to the speaking voice with orchestral accompaniment. It was too new for the audience. But the music, written so lovingly, could not fail to charm; and the piece still holds its ground to an extent seldom attained in this day of incessant strain and breathless competition.

## CHAPTER XIX

### EISTEDDFODAU

My first engagement (1883) as a National Eisteddfod adjudicator—Cardiff resolved to make a “record”—London Orchestra—Many prizes and large amounts—Welsh taste in music—Love of hymnody—Passion for their own language—The brass band a favourite—Llew Lwyfo, the Bard—His adventure at Caermarthen in 1867—A small Eisteddfod at Bettws-y-Coed—I become a burlesque Bard in the hands of Tanymarian and Mynyddog—Talhairn and his cure of fatigue—Dolgelley Eisteddfod—I adjudicate annually through fourteen years—A “banquet,” with much speaking—Various experiences—A struggle at Llandudno—Another at Newport—The Eisteddfod in London—A final story.

EARLY in 1883 Mr Samuel Aitken, a prominent musical amateur and organist in Cardiff, wrote to me stating that as honorary secretary of the musical department of a National Eisteddfod to be holden in the Welsh city some months later, he was empowered to offer me an engagement as one of the adjudicators. Neither of us had any personal knowledge of the other, but Mr Aitken informed me that he had long been a reader of my articles in the *Daily Telegraph*, etc. I accepted the offer.

The Eisteddfod was outlined on a large scale, but here I have only to do with the section which personally concerned me. That it was well equipped will appear if I state that a large

orchestra came down from London, and was placed under the direction of Mr Edmund Turpin (the late Dr Edmund Turpin of Trinity College), whose appointment to the most responsible musical post I was never able to understand. There was a large local chorus, and a full array of solo vocalists, English and Welsh.

This was all very well ; in point of fact, nothing could have been better, but, as at Caermarthen in 1867, the effect was damaged by a serious mistake. Cardiff, as everybody knows, flourishes near the border of the vast coal district of which Rhondda Valley is the centre, and a National Eisteddfod held in the vicinity of the mines is certain to attract a myriad of miners. Their tastes in music are simple. They love to lift up their voices in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. They will listen for hours to native Welsh music, provided it is married to native Welsh words ; and if the ways of an Eisteddfod in these respects are not to their liking, they will say so without the smallest ceremony. They are a democratic people, with no pretence of respect for their "betters," as such, and a chairman who addresses them at length in the English language is certain to receive forcible admonitions. I have watched the process so many times that every step is familiar. An Eisteddfod audience will listen to a speaker in English (a foreign tongue, observe) for a while, but if he does not change to Welsh, the protest begins, and soon arrives the crisis, in which the orator

cannot but be aware that his chance is lost, and that he has no choice but to sit down discomfited. A special public of this kind must be humoured by being offered what it desires to have. And that is, at an Eisteddfod, Welsh music sung to Welsh words, and instrumental music with a Celtic flavour, provided the performers are of the country, and the competitive spirit is abroad. They will even listen to brass bands, loving them for the blare and bluster which suggests conflicts and their chances. Welsh regiments fight capitally now; how they must have fought when their bands played them into action with "The March of the Men of Harlech," "or some still higher strain."

In my remarks upon the achievements of Sir George A. Macfarren, I described an Eisteddfod "scene" at Cardiff, in which that musical dignitary played a prominent part. Though interesting as showing that it was then possible for a gentleman to rise and propose a vote of thanks to the chairman while one of the most important contests of the week was proceeding, it was by no means so significant as the series of "scenes" presented to my astonished gaze at Caermarthen in 1867. This was the occasion (already mentioned) on which poor Brinley Richards so gravely offended his countrymen by introducing to them a number of excellent English artists, and much music no less meritorious. The back benches speedily protested. They wanted Welsh songs, and Welsh songs they



would have through the gentle process of stopping all other.

Fortunately, perhaps, for all concerned, one of the visitors to the Eisteddfod was a native singer very popular amongst the back-bench people. His name was probably Jones, but the people loved better to call him by his Bardic title, "Llew Lwyfo" (I hope I have spelled it right), and it soon came to pass that when one of the alien artists stood forward to sing or play he was received with shouts of "Llew, Llew!" I cannot say how much time was wasted by this contest, but when it seemed the only thing left to do, the Eisteddfod managers sent up a white flag, engaged Llew, and appealed for quiet. It was both curious and amusing, after this satisfaction of Welsh patriotism, to hear "The Lion" roaring Hatton's "Simon the Cellarer" amid fervent applause. I was not surprised by the back-benches, nor could I entirely blame them for their revolt against the programme. At a Welsh festival, the Welsh people naturally expect to hear some Welsh music, and the persons responsible for the trouble at Caermarthen were the managers, who, living among their own people, disastrously failed to understand their wants and wishes.

The Eisteddfod is seen below its best, perhaps, when it is not a "national" gathering, with good cash prizes which attract a crowd of pot-hunters, with some pretence of pomp and circumstance often so poorly carried out as to make the judicious grieve,

and with a fiercely competitive spirit that tends, under the circumstances, to moral decadence. I have most enjoyed the local Eisteddfod, with its modest pretence, unaffected simplicity, general feeling of neighbourliness, and comparative absence of shams. Many years ago, when wandering about North Wales, I came upon an example of this class.

Driving to Bettws-y-Coed from Festiniog after dark, on a quiet autumn evening, my Jehu, pointing to a light that glinted through some distant trees, said, "They are holding an Eisteddfod this week where that light is; you go, of course?" Why, of course?" I queried. "Well, sir," said my companion, "every Englishman goes to an Eisteddfod when he gets the chance." "But," said I, "what does he go for when he doesn't understand the language?" "Who can tell, sir," said Jehu. Here ended the dialogue, and we soon found the Eisteddfod pavilion, which was pitched in a field bordering the road, and just then having the finishing touches put to its simple decorations.

In the road near the hotel I seemed to hear a familiar voice—that, indeed, of Edith Wynne, the chief Eisteddfod singer, with whom were two famous conductors. A conductor at an Eisteddfod acts, I may say, as a sort of master of the ceremonies. His business is to keep order, to see that the proceedings are carried on according to the programme, and to keep an unruly audience

in good temper by telling them stories and cracking jokes. It is a difficult vocation, but the two gentlemen with Edith Wynne were masters of the craft. Each was known by his bardic name, that of one being Tanymarian, that of the other Mynyddog, and both were good fellows, if I may so familiarly speak of Welsh nonconformist ministers, which, perhaps, is doubtful. They were well known all over Wales, and are still well remembered as having done good work and won a place in Eisteddfod history. From the road we moved to Edith Wynne's lodgings, and had a merry time, the two conductors telling Eisteddfod stories, turn and turn about, as who would never end. One incident of the evening rather closely concerned myself. On the proposal of Tanymarian, seconded by Mynyddog, and approved by one or two other bards present, it was resolved to confer upon me the dignity of an Ovate. I protested against burlesqueing a ceremony which they were bound to respect, but the mummary continued, and ended with congratulations, also with the presentation of "a half-sheet of note-paper" (these were days *ante* Mr Balfour), on which were written in Welsh certain particulars, with names and dates all precise. I think the actors in the farce were somewhat taken aback when, with a gravity equal to their own, I stated that on the morrow I would post the paper to the Secretary of the Gorsedd that it might be stamped and registered. At any-rate, the joke thereupon exploded in bursts of

laughter, and not very much was got out of the Saxon who, as a matter of fact, had "been there before."

I knew well another bard, Talhairn, who was an Eisteddfod conductor, and something more. Talhairn lived in London, where he held a position of trust, but every autumn, not only his heart, but his entire person was found in Wales, carrying out with zeal and intelligence the ceremonies of the old institution. I met him, on one occasion, in North Wales, but precisely where it is now impossible for me to say. Enough, that he worked very hard in the cause of law and order at a rustic gathering, and with admirable firmness, restrained himself from giving way to instincts of a troublesome kind. On the last day of the feast, I sat out an hour with him in his inn, and had an interesting chat on Eisteddfodic matters. But he was restless and craving. "Oh, for a glass of beer!" cried Talhairn. "I have vowed not to touch it till the exercises are over, and then, ah, then, I shall get drunk for a week!" Whether he did so or not, I do not know, but those who were more familiar with him than myself have told me that it was not unusual for him so to celebrate the end of his labours.

Talhairn was the author of a volume of poems, some in Welsh, some in English, and all indicating the possession of very considerable poetic talent. I used to enjoy the book at odd moments, till somebody—borrowed it. I would rather he had stolen it.

I had ample opportunity of studying the local Eisteddfod at Dolgelley, where, through some fourteen years, I acted, in an honorary capacity, as musical adjudicator. This meeting was always held on New Year's Day, and served, year by year, to brighten the course of the winter months in that picturesque, but often, by weather, troubled region. It says much for my luck that I travelled under many meteorological conditions to the quaint old Welsh town, yet never was "held up" by them. Under any circumstances, whether of clouds and gloom, or the pale sunshine of a kindly mid-winter, it was delightful to pass from Llangollen to Dolgelley; moving, not very speedily it is true, along the banks of Dee and the margin of Bala water, then rushing, with a roar, down the long incline by the side of the hurrying torrents which neither lake nor river had claimed as eastern spoil. And so on till the scattered lights of Dolgelley, overhung by the vague, dark masses of Cader Idris, proclaimed the end of my journey.

There was always a cheery welcome for the musical adjudicator at Dolgelley. The Eisteddfod leaders would meet him at the station, escort him to his hotel, and see him snugly installed under the commanding auspices of my friend O. O. Roberts, in whom was the musical life of the meeting, and much of all the other life that carried it on.

There was little time for gossip after arrival, for the Eisteddfod boasted a "banquet," held (Sunday not interfering) on New Year's Eve, and attended

by a delightfully comprehensive assemblage of classes, from squires to working men, not forgetting artists engaged as singers or players. What a merry company we were; how fluently we spoke, how ardently we sang, and how interested we were in a species of table penillion which the English, who did not understand it, proclaimed a great success. Truly, 'twas a jovial feast wherewith to occupy the last hours of the dying year. As for the subjects of the speeches, I sometimes, in my practical English fashion, failed to see what relation many of them bore to the Eisteddfod. That was the fault of the programme committee, acting upon the comprehensive wordiness of the guests. I recollect how, in the dismal December of 1899, we went religiously through all the loyal toasts, but made a long stop at the "Army and Navy," while the proposer enlarged copiously upon the war, in the true spirit of Uncle Toby, and the gentleman told off to respond did so with corresponding amplification. By the time we had finished with the war it was late, and I remembered that we still had to discuss toasts of a less expansive nature, as, for example, "Mr Bennett and Mr Barrett," the second of these honoured ones being the well-known flautist, who regularly journeyed to Dolgelley and worked for the Eisteddfod like the best Trojan of them all. I had prepared my speech with some care, but attempt its delivery I could not. The company would much more pleasantly have opened a formal

debate upon Colenso and Magersfontein, with remarks upon the military character of Redvers Buller. So much is even your civilian Welshman a fighting man.

To the Eisteddfod at Dolgelly would come a crowd, brought by special trains from all surrounding regions. But the Town Hall, in which the formal proceedings took place, would not hold a tithe of the visitors ; and those who could not enter in were seemingly quite content to stay without, catching what was possible of music and oratory from the open windows. They were most eager, I have been assured, to know the names of the victors in competition. Had Barmouth won the "chief Choral?" If so, every Barmouth man in the square outside cheered amain, or flung his hat in the air, or danced, or did something in the nature of a spasm to declare his joy. So with the best male-voice choir, or the female choir, or the children's choir, or the victorious brass band. The enthusiasm was good to see, but I doubt if music had much to do with it. The honour and glory of the district whence came the conquerors were all in all.

During the years of my adjudicatorship I noticed but little general improvement. There was no disappointment in this, for I could not see how, with the system then in vogue, it was possible to gain much ground. Fancy a competitive choir working through six months at a couple of oratorio choruses, or as many part songs, or, perhaps, one

of each kind. Of course the singers came up "stale," with the freshness of life gone out of them, and with a break-down, or a slip, dogging them through the competitions. I saw the result of this at a National Eisteddfod held in Llandudno some years ago. The chief choral competition carried a large money prize—if I am not mistaken, it was £200—and great was the excitement of the day; vast also, the gathering of the tribes who came to hear and criticise the adjudicators' verdict.

Of that body I was one, and so was Frederick Cowen; the majority, however, being Welshmen, such as Roberts of Carnarvon, Jenkins of Aberystwith, and others of like standing. We were curiously accommodated in an elevated box built round one of the pillars supporting the roof, and made accessible by a stairway rising from near the front of the orchestra. This was a sensible arrangement. It cut us off from the opinions of the people sitting near, whom also it prevented from hearing whatever we thought proper to say one to another. But generally the conditions under which the test took place were perfectly fair, and no charge, as far as I am aware, was ever brought against them. I am bound to say, however, that there was a decided chance of trouble before the competition closed, arising from the fact that South Wales had sent up (from Mèrthyr) a choir which had gained many large prizes during its career, and was, indeed, accounted very hard to beat. Its conductor, Mr Dan Davies, carried on a business in some way



connected with pigs. At any rate, that was the information given to me some half-dozen times by an equal number of persons. In reply, I told them that Mr Davis's occupation was nothing at all to me, and that I respected him as a musician strictly according to the merit of his artistic achievements. But the advent of the South Walians carried dismay into the ranks of their northern neighbours, who entered the competition with, I fear, something less than the average confidence of a Welsh choir in such circumstances.

The struggle went on for some time without much promise to those who took part in it. But such monotonous mediocrity was bound to change, and after a while a choir comparatively weak in numbers lined up on the platform. Our programme told us that these singers came from the district around Builth, a town not far from the eastern border of Central Wales. There was little of a typical Welsh choir in their appearance and bearing, and after they had dealt with the first of the two pieces the judges looked at each other significantly. The second piece confirmed our opinion that only a particularly good choir would have a chance against them. No such choir remained to be heard, and by a unanimous vote the prize was awarded to the Builth singers, of whom nobody seemed to have heard before. The surprise of the huge audience was extreme, and comparatively little cheering congratulated the winners. Dumb with astonishment the Merthyr folk retired in

silence, to comfort themselves, perhaps, with reasons why the verdict should have been different, but they were wise enough to make no show of opposition, and in that respect, as in others, all passed off well.

I met the Merthyr people a few years later at a National Eisteddfod held in Newport (Mon.). My relation to this contest was simply that of a journalist, and I had no part nor voice in the decisions given. But the fight for the chief choral prize was interesting as ever. Merthyr, again under Dan Davies, did its best, and once more was beaten. This was too much. It meant the deposition of the miners' town from the rank it had assumed, and the fiery Celt could not endure such a decadence without tending to flame.

Sir A. C. Mackenzie acted as chief adjudicator on this occasion and delivered the verdict, which, if I rightly remember, was, like that at Llandudno, unanimous, though less quietly received. When all was over, and Sir Alexander was leaving the building by its chief exit, a gentleman stopped him, intimating that it might be unsafe to appear in the street just then and there, and advising that he should wait until certain groups of men had disappeared. After some conversation, the gentleman offered to pilot Sir Alexander through a door at the rear, and so, by a little-frequented route, to the hotel. That is the story as I heard it on the spot, but possibly it was no more than a product of fear momentarily in possession of the friendly gentle-

man's mind. Still, there has been trouble in past days, and precautionary measures are seldom entirely out of place.

The National Eisteddfod has celebrated itself in London more than once or twice, in order, as I assume, to give Welsh Londoners, of whom there are thousands, an opportunity of sharing its advantages. But these self-exiled Celts seem to care very little about the ancient institution so loyally placed within their reach. At any rate, few of them attend the meetings, even when it is announced that a Prince and Princess of Wales have promised their presence and a conspicuous example. It is true that cheap special trains bring crowds of Welsh people to London when the Eisteddfod is here, but the good folk are better pleased to see the "lions" of town than to hear music which is with them always.

The Welsh Londoners have their local Eisteddfodau when funds are needed for the repair or adornment of their chapels, but, as far as I have observed, the success of these is by no means uniform. I have acted as an adjudicator at two such meetings, both held in Queen's Hall. Of these, one was fairly fortunate; the other had the most dismal of luck, which fact reached me officially in a letter from the secretary, who asked if I would kindly accept one half of my stipulated fee, and help them to that extent out of their difficulties. I trust it is unnecessary to say that I promptly made the requested sacrifice. But the

other half never came, and I never applied for it. The reader, perhaps, will agree with me that the committee should have explained why they kept both halves, and expressed some sort or measure of regret.

One more story, and this chapter ends.

The National Eisteddfod held its meeting, some forty years ago, at Ruthin, a town not far from Denbigh, and, for the better attraction of its concerts, engaged, amongst others, my familiar friends Lewis Thomas and an artist whom, as he is, happily, still living, I will call X. It was holiday season with me, and we were three travelling north-west to the temporary home of the Bards. Arrived at Ruthin, and knowing not where to go, X. volunteered to rummage the little town for a week's lodgement. He went, armed with full powers, and returned, and this is what he had to say: "They can take us, but we must each share a bed with a bard, or some one of that sort"! Heavens and earth! you should have heard the scornful laughter which rang out in the station-yard as X. delivered his information. We flung the proposition from us, and went on to Denbigh.

I have reason to believe that the Welsh are rather unconventional in the matter of lodging visitors. Dear old Lewis Thomas once told me how some friends of his were benighted on the lower slopes of Plinlimmon, and sought refuge in a wayside inn. They asked for a night's lodging, and were informed, after some hesitation, that a

bed could be made up in a room usually occupied by the two daughters of the host and hostess. "Oh!" said the guests, "we cannot think of disturbing the ladies." "Indeed to goodness," retorted the host, "that is all we can do, and there are two beds and dividing curtains." Observing the frank simplicity and sincerity of the good people a bargain was made, the girls retired within the shelter of the curtains, and in due time the guests also sought the arms of Morpheus. On waking next morning they found that the ladies had vanished. It is only a few years ago, when Aberystwith rejoiced in a coming of Royalty, that the landlady of a respectable hotel offered me accommodation if I did not mind sharing the room with another visitor. I did mind, and there was an end of bargaining. All this reads like an eighteenth century novel, or passages from the veracious life of Casanova de Seingalt, without however, having anything in common with the Venetian rake's beastliness.

## CHAPTER XX

### MUSICAL CORRESPONDENCE

Letters from Minnie Hauk de Wartegg—Marie Krebs Brenning—  
T. Chrysander—M. W. Balfe—Baroness Burdett-Coutts.

### THE GILDED EAST

**F**EW musical people can have forgotten that Minnie Hauk (Carmencita) married the famous traveller, Herr Von Wartegg. In the letter below we see husband and wife—music and research—honoured in the country of “barbaric gems and gold,” and loaded down with the presents of Princes. Those who have not forgotten her—and who could forget Carmencita—will be pleased to read her own words.

“ASTOR HOUSE, SHANGHAI,  
*May 23, 1894*

“MY DEAR MR BENNETT,—A greeting to you from the *far East* from your old, and, may I say, *not quite* forgotten Carmencita.

I know it will interest you to see how I am appreciated, and although I am not on this trip “around the world” professionally (for the enclosed notice is the first on any public concert of mine out here) for I am really on a pleasure trip on my

part, and on a research one on the part of my husband.

“ I sang at a big reception at Singapore tendered me by the Clubs—receiving a gorgeous Japanese bronze vase as a souvenir, and also I sang for the Sultan of Johore at his Palace, where we were his guests for a week. He honoured both my husband and myself with a decoration, besides giving us large photographs with his signature attached. It was a most memorable visit, in such exotic surroundings, and amid the glorious tropical vegetation. But the purest chapter of the Arabian Nights’ Tales was reserved for us at Bangkok, Siam. This is indeed Fairy Land, and if I wanted to begin to depict a part of all we saw there, I couldn’t finish these lines to you for several days to come—suffice it for me to say that every attention and civility was shown us to make our ten days stay a never-to-be-forgotten one. We had three steam launches of the King at our disposal to go up the river, where we also had fifteen elephants in one Kraal—of course we saw the three white (so-called) elephants in the King’s Palace grounds—and we came away laden with mementoes as souvenirs from our new friends. Our visit to Siam will, I am sure, be the most interesting of our whole trip. In two days we were off to Peking and then go to Japan, which country I am most desirous to see. We shall remain there for four weeks, and make the Grand Hotel, Tokio, our headquarters. My hus-

band also goes to Corea, but I shall not accompany him there.

"We have had 106° and 107° F. in the shade, but strange it has had no bad effect on my voice, for it is very easy and in splendid form, although I have been awfully inconvenienced by the terrible heat day and night. Here the heat is more normal. —Yours ever sincerely,

"MINNIE HAUKE DE WARTEGG"

"LITTLE MARIE KREBS"

The letter subjoined will remind many amateurs of an old favourite, who, in the seventies and eighties, was an annual visitor to London, and a frequent pianist at the Popular Concerts. I remember her as a child whose quaint curtsy, exactly like the "bob" of an English village girl, so amused her audience. I called upon the family once in Dresden, shortly after the death of Herr Krebs, a musician of repute, and a most successful collector of moths and kindred creatures.

DRESDEN, STREHEEN STRASSE 1,  
2 Sept. 1893

"DEAR MR BENNETT,—Do you still remember 'Little Marie Krebs,' to whom you have always been so kind ever since she first came to London, up to the time when she was grown up, and whose way of speaking English always made you laugh and smile? I do hope that you have not for-





Maria Knebel.  
Aug 1886



gotten me, though it is quite a long time since I last have been in England! Ever since I have been married—very happily married—we have a large own house, and Mama and Aunts live in the same house—and only one is wanting: *we lost our dear little boy!* Ever since I have taken more to music again, though I do no more go about travelling so much as I used to do when I came to England; now I have duties at home. You would really be astonished what a good cook I am—a regular ‘German Hausfrau’—I do wish you would, when perhaps coming to Germany and passing Dresden, come and have a meal at our house! Of course, last but not least, I do always go on with concerts and music, and have during the last years received a number of pupils for pianoforte lessons at my own house—mostly English, very talented young ladies. Would it be asking too much, when I said please mention my name occasionally in the *D.T.* saying that I still exist, still play at Concerts, and that I give pianoforte lessons to a limited number of pupils?

“I also take the liberty of enclosing a little book, a biography of myself, which came out last year. By that you can see all I have been doing since I last have been in England. I should like to come over once more, only, of course, I could not stay for so long as I used to do before I was married.

“Perhaps you will be kind enough to send a few words in answer, and tell me that you do not

too much mind my troubling you?—With kindest regards, very sincerely,

“MARIE KREBS BRENNING”

### CHRYSANDER

Dr Chrysander could never disburden himself of Handel, whose man he was through the working days of his life, labouring constantly, though not, perhaps, in all respects wisely, for the honour and glory of the great Saxon.

“BERGEDORF BEI HAMBURG,  
*June 24 : 1894*

“DEAR SIR,—For some time I have been pleased with your advocating a cause which I have very much at heart, and upon which I have spent the best part of my life: the true position and performance of Handel’s compositions. When visiting London recently I very much desired to call upon you, but partly my own work, and partly the knowledge of your being unusually busy during the height of the season, made me postpone it until the autumn. Trusting that I may then have a chat with you on Handelian matters and ‘old robberies,’ I beg to remain, dear sir, yours sincerely,

“T. CHRYSANDER

“JOSEPH BENNETT, Esq.”

### AN UNACCEPTED OFFER

The subjoined letter explains itself, but I may say that Balfe was ever eager to resume his old

place in the Haymarket. Luigi Arditi, stepped in before him.

"DEAR MR SMITH,—I hear you have taken Her Majesty's Theatre; will you have me at my old post? To save trouble and time I mention salary, £30 a week. I will work like a slave, and be very useful as well as ornamental. A line here directed Poste Restante will find yours very truly,

"M. W. BALFE

"ST PETERSBOURG, *March* 6, 1860."

#### A LETTER OF SYMPATHY AND AID

The benevolent spirit of the late Baroness Burdett-Coutts showed itself in many ways, but especially when the claim upon her help was made by or for a suffering artist. She knew Mdme. Louisa Pyne well, and was an active supporter of the enterprises in which that able artist was concerned. She was "faithful unto death." The letter below was written to the late Sir Edwin Arnold from whom I received it.

"1 STRATTON STREET, W.

*Nov.* 21, '95

"DEAR SIR EDWIN,—Your letter about poor Mrs (Louisa) Pyne gave me much comfort, for her sad and most deserving case has given me and the other friends interested in her great anxiety. I hope now, through your kindly intervention, a certainty, however small, may be

secured to her. Immediately I received your letter I communicated with Lady Thompson, and asked her to get the form signed by herself, Sir Edward (Lawson) Sullivan, and Mr Santley, and send it to me to sign, and I will, as soon as I get it, forward it to you. Can you think of any one else whose name would carry benefit? Dr Bridge, of Westminster Abbey, is a musical authority. I could obtain his, or the Dean's, or any one else you could suggest or obtain to strengthen our petition.—Yours sincerely,

“BURDETT-COUTTS

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